

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 12, 2026 ■ 29 AV, 5786



Changing Mideast

'Israel must shift stance as Syria abandons nukes'

Page 3

Reality or dream?

Billionaire envisions Mideast parliament in Israel

Page 5

Songs from captivity

Freed hostage Sagui Dekel-Chen performs songs he wrote in Gaza

Page 16



ROUND 'EM UP

Cowgirl Neomi corrals her herd at sunrise on the Golan Heights yesterday, following the Samech River wildfire near Moshav Natur the previous night. (Michael Giladi/Flash90)

Netanyahu reserves Likud slots for three ministers

Party court freezes Haim Katz's spot • Some MKs furious at reduced number of realistic Knesset places

• By KESHET NEEV and SARAH BEN-NUN

The Likud party's secretariat on Tuesday approved reserved slots on its Knesset slate for Defense Minister Israel Katz and Foreign Minister Gideon Sa'ar, who were selected by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu ahead of the upcoming elections.

The party's internal court blocked the third of Netanyahu's reserved slots, which was intended for Likud Central Committee Chairman Haim Katz, who also holds multiple ministerial portfolios.

The formal requests for the reserved slots were submitted to the Likud secretariat. While the vote was underway, the court issued an interim order freezing the proposed slot for Katz.

The court noted that Katz had already registered to run in the August 17 primaries and began campaigning. If the reserved slot were approved, he could stop campaigning, only to be placed at a disadvantage if the court later overturned the approval and he was forced back into the race. The court therefore suspended the vote on Katz's



ISRAEL KATZ
(Nick Paleologos/SOOC /AFP via Getty Images)



GIDEON SA'AR
(Leon Lord/AFP via Getty Images)



HAIM KATZ
(Avshalom Sassoni/Flash90)

slot pending a further decision.

The vote by the Likud secretariat on Tuesday came after Netanyahu's ability to control the slate was expanded last month.

The premier was granted the authority to determine eight slots within the first 30 spots on the party list last month following a vote on the controversial decision by the Likud Central Committee.

The party said that its internal

court ruled last week that the defense minister receive a reserved slot, "even though he was already expected to reach the top of the list," in order to "allow him to focus on security needs rather than engage in politics at this time."

Likud also stated that Sa'ar would receive a reserved slot as part of the merger agreement between his party and Likud and that the Likud Central Committee chairperson would receive a slot due to his senior position in the party.

Sa'ar announced in 2025 that his New Hope-United Right would be merging with Likud, and he would be returning to the party. He previously resigned from Likud in 2020, heavily criticizing Netanyahu at the time.

The party announced on Monday that Netanyahu's first reserved slot would go to entrepreneur and businessman Oren Dobronsky. Shortly after 1 a.m. on Tuesday, it said that the three ministers

See LIKUD, Page 7

'Lebanese military not doing enough to disarm Hezbollah'

• By AMICHAJ STEIN

Israeli officials say that even though roughly three weeks have passed since the start of the pilot program to disarm Hezbollah, the Lebanese Armed Forces are "not doing enough," according to two Israeli officials who spoke to *The Jerusalem Post*.

On July 20, 2026, Israel, the United States, and the LAF

launched a security pilot program in southern Lebanon. As part of the initiative, the IDF began withdrawing from three villages – Bir al-Sana, Sarifa, and Zawtar al-Gharbiyah – and transferring their security and deployment responsibility to the Lebanese army.

One of the officials told the *Post* that the LAF has entered the area and even uncovered

weapons and ammunition caches but said that "it is still not enough."

"The test will be whether the Lebanese army enters Hezbollah infrastructure and actually confronts the terrorist organization," the official said.

Another round of talks between the Israeli and Lebanese delegations is expected

See DISARM, Page 7

Can modified Dardik punishment be used to ease detention for some Palestinians?

ANALYSIS

• By YONAH JEREMY BOB

On Monday, the IDF made an unusual decision regarding the settler and allegedly dangerous activist, Tal Yinon Dardik, which might be a model for reducing administrative detention for some Palestinians.

Since October 7, the number of Palestinians in administrative detention has tripled and quadrupled.

Previously, it had been on a spectrum of between hundreds and around 1,000, and for the last three years, between 3,000 and over 3,300.

Along with other issues,

See DETENTION, Page 7



ADMINISTRATIVE DETAINEE Tal Yinon Dardik arrives at the Jerusalem District Court for a hearing last week. (Chaim Goldberg/Flash90)

NYC rabbis tell Mamdani: Israel rhetoric makes Jews feel unsafe

INTERVIEW

• By MATHILDA HELLER

Two rabbis who attended New York City Mayor Zohran Mamdani's hour-long, closed-door roundtable at City Hall on Monday said they left feeling "hopeful" and that the mayor attended in "good faith."

The meeting – convened by the Mayor's Office to Combat Antisemitism – featured 10 rabbis from various Jewish denominations. *The Jerusalem Post* reached out to several rabbis who participated, including Rabbi Jonathan Leener, leader of the Prospect Heights Shul, a liberal Modern Orthodox synagogue in the Brooklyn, and Rabbi "S," who

did not wish to be named.

"I chose to participate in the roundtable given the opportunity to represent my community's views directly to the mayor," Rabbi S told the *Post*. "One of the organizers assured us that we would all have a chance to speak, so the opportunity to really be there on behalf of my community was a meaningful one, and I felt that the outreach was made in good faith with an openness to listen, so it felt worth going to express our points of view and raise our concerns."

Rabbi Leener had a similar incentive: "As a rabbi, I see my role as an advocate for the safety and well-being of the Jewish people, especially my

fellow New Yorkers."

Leener said he has profound disagreements with Mamdani, particularly around Israel, and that some of the mayor's rhetoric has contributed to "turning up the temperature at a moment when many Jewish New Yorkers already feel increasingly vulnerable."

"That is precisely why I felt it was important to show up and say those things directly to him," he said. "The meeting was also an opportunity to move beyond public statements and talk concretely about what the city government can do to address antisemitism and help Jewish

See NYC, Page 7

SOUTH CAROLINA GOP PRIMARY:

Trump backs sister of Lindsey Graham in vote

• By IDAN KWELLER

Darline Graham Nordone – appointed to fill her brother Lindsey Graham's seat after he passed away – has been endorsed by US President Donald Trump and is running as a political outsider against two Republican congressmen and a former governor seeking a political comeback.

One month after the death of veteran senator Lindsey Graham, South Carolina Republicans return to the polls for an extraordinary pri-

mary to choose their party's Senate nominee.

At the center of the contest is Graham's sister, Graham Nordone, who was appointed to the Senate one day after her brother's death to serve out the remainder of his term. Soon afterward, she announced that she would seek a full term of her own, securing Trump's endorsement.

Her path to the nomination, however, is far from guaranteed.

Some Republicans in South Carolina have expressed unease over what they see as the party establishment in Washington quickly

Syrian court sentences Bashar Assad to death in absentia

DAMASCUS (Reuters) – A Syrian court sentenced ousted leader Bashar al-Assad to death on Tuesday after a trial in absentia, convicting him of crimes including killings, torture, and arbitrary arrest during the country's nearly 14-year war.

It was the first Syrian conviction against Assad, ousted in a rebel offensive in December 2024 that ended decades of his family's iron-fisted rule over Syria and the brutal war that killed hundreds of thousands of Syrians.

Citizens gathered around the court in Damascus, chanting, clapping, and waving the Syrian flag as news of the sentences spread.

Assad fled the capital as rebel fighters closed in nearly two years ago. He is currently in Russia, where he and his family were granted asylum on humanitarian grounds.

Security official tried in person

In a trial of former government officials on Tuesday, a judge handed down a death sentence to the former president over the crimes of "premeditated and intentional murder of more than one person and of children; torture, arbitrary arrest, and crimes against humanity."

The judge issued the same sentence in absentia to Assad's brother Maher, who headed the fearsome Fourth Armoured Division, responsible for crackdowns on protests and recapturing Syrian territory on behalf of Assad, and accused of spearheading the production and trade of drugs to enrich Assad.

A death sentence was also handed down to Atef Najib, an Assad-era security official



AN ANTI-GOVERNMENT fighter tears down a giant poster of Syria's former president Bashar al-Assad in Aleppo in 2024. (Mohammed Al-Rifai/AFP via Getty Images)



9770793913047

33

12/08/2026

פוסט חול

See TRUMP, Page 7

See DEATH, Page 7

ELDERLY PETITION OVER DIFFICULTY IN VOTING AT CARE HOMES

High Court slams Knesset retreat on ballot boxes

• By SARAH BEN-NUN

The High Court of Justice sharply criticized the Knesset on Tuesday for failing to provide dedicated polling stations in nursing homes and assisted-living facilities for the upcoming election, but appeared reluctant to impose, through a court ruling, an arrangement lawmakers had chosen not to enact.

Supreme Court Chief Justice Isaac Amit said the system used in the previous two elections had “worked perfectly,” speaking from his experience as chairman of the Central Elections Committee.

“This is the first time the Knesset is going backward instead of expanding” access to voting, Amit said, adding that the decision was regrettable and that, in his personal view, the arrangement should have been retained.

The court did not issue a ruling at the end of the hearing.

The three petitions, heard by Amit and Justices Ofer Grosskopf and Gila Canfy-Steinitz, challenge the Knesset Constitution, Law and Justice Committee’s decision not to advance legislation allowing special polling stations to be placed in nursing homes and assisted-living facilities.

Such stations were operated during the previous two elections under temporary legislation introduced during

the COVID-19 pandemic. The Central Elections Committee recommended making the arrangement available again, but the Knesset committee declined to advance the proposal after it failed to receive broad support.

The decision leaves many elderly residents dependent on ordinary polling arrangements, even when the polling station assigned to their registered address is outside the facility where they live. Some residents have limited mobility or require wheelchairs, walkers, escorts, or assistance from staff to leave their homes.

The petitions were filed by dozens of nursing-home and assisted-living residents, as well as organizations representing older Israelis. They argue that the Knesset’s decision could prevent some residents from voting altogether, violating the constitutional right to vote and the principle of equality in elections.

Attorney Yuval Yoaz, representing one group of petitioners, told the court that there was no dispute that elderly Israelis must be able to vote. The question, he said, was whether the state had done enough to ensure that the right could actually be exercised.

The petitioners proposed two possible solutions. The first would have the court temporarily apply the previous statutory arrangement to the



PRESIDENT OF the Supreme Court Isaac Amit (center) prepares to hear petitions at the Supreme Court in Jerusalem last month. (Chaim Goldberg/Flash90)

coming election. Yoaz argued that this would not require the court to design a new voting system, since the mechanism had already been enacted and successfully operated.

Alternatively, they asked the court to interpret the Central Elections Committee’s existing powers broadly and require it to establish suitable polling stations under the law as it currently stands.

The justices, however, repeat-

edly questioned whether the first proposal would improperly place the court in the Knesset’s role.

Grosskopf noted that lawmakers had made a deliberate decision not to reenact what had previously been a temporary arrangement.

“There are many laws that are not enacted for political reasons,” he said. “We cannot replace the Knesset.”

Canfy-Steinitz similarly ques-

tioned the suggestion that an existing arrangement had simply been allowed to expire, noting that the previous rules were temporary provisions and that enacting them for the 2026 election would require new legislation.

Amit nevertheless made clear his dissatisfaction with the Knesset’s decision. He noted that election law has gradually expanded special voting arrangements for other groups,

including police officers, prison guards, and hospital patients.

He also questioned why provisions addressing voting by sailors remained on the books while the growing elderly population had been left without a dedicated arrangement.

Attorney Yitzhak Bart, representing the Knesset, argued that the previous system had been adopted specifically because pandemic restrictions made entering and leaving nursing homes particularly difficult. Those restrictions no longer exist, he said, and the court should not create a legislative arrangement that the Knesset has declined to enact.

THE CENTRAL ELECTIONS COMMITTEE, meanwhile, said it was attempting to provide a partial solution within its existing authority.

Attorney Yonatan Berman of the State Attorney’s Office said the committee had contacted approximately 290 nursing homes and assisted-living facilities about placing regular regional polling stations on their premises.

Where technically possible, those stations would also be designated accessible, allowing people who declare that they have limited mobility to vote there using double envelopes.

So far, 65 institutions have agreed, while discussions with dozens of others remain under-

way. Fifty-six facilities have objected, in part because a regional polling station would have to admit voters from outside the facility and remain operational through the vote count.

Unlike the dedicated stations used in the previous elections, the proposed solution depends on each facility’s consent and would not necessarily serve residents whose registered address places them in another voting district.

Berman acknowledged that the plan would not provide a complete answer. Where a polling station could not be placed inside a facility, the committee would seek to establish an accessible station within a reasonable distance, he said. Approximately 3,500 accessible polling stations are expected to operate nationwide.

Amit said he was persuaded that the Central Elections Committee was making a serious effort and asked it to examine further options, including whether facilities that had refused could be identified so residents and advocacy organizations could approach them.

The committee has not yet formally approved the placement of the polling stations. Its decision is expected by August 18, the statutory deadline 70 days before the election.

The court said a decision on the petitions would be issued separately.

Court orders release of settler Dardik

Judge declines to impose criminal-court restrictions but stresses Dardik remains bound by military order barring him from most of the West Bank

• By SARAH BEN-NUN

The Jerusalem Magistrate’s Court ordered the immediate release of settler Tal Yinon Dardik on Tuesday, finding insufficient grounds to keep him detained over charges that he violated an earlier military restriction order.

Judge Amir Shaked released Dardik without imposing additional conditions through the criminal proceeding. He stressed, however, that Dardik remains subject to a separate military order issued on Monday that bars him from nearly all of the West Bank and requires him to report regularly to police.

The ruling therefore ends Dardik’s detention but does not allow him to return freely to the West Bank or invalidate the security establishment’s assessment that restrictions against him are warranted.

Dardik is suspected of involvement in attacks against Palestinians and other nationalist-motivated offenses, including a March raid in which a Palestinian man was allegedly subjected to severe physical and sexual abuse. Dardik denies involvement, and he has not been charged over those allegations.

Security authorities said intelligence connected him to illegal and violent activity that endangered lives and property. A military appeals committee and the Jerusalem District Court subsequently found that the intelligence justified substantial restrictions and that the original decision to issue an administrative order against him was reasonable and proportionate.

The criminal case that led to his detention is narrower: Dardik was charged with six counts of violating a lawful order and one count of obstructing a police officer after authorities said he failed to remain at his mother-in-law’s home in the Adei Ad settlement, as required by an order signed by Central Command chief Maj.-Gen. Avi Bluth on June 9.

His mother-in-law, however, had not agreed to house him.

A military appeals committee ruled that Bluth could not compel a third party to accommodate Dardik against her wishes and canceled that part of the order. The Jerusalem District Court upheld the committee’s decision on Sunday, while leaving intact its finding that Dardik posed a real danger to



ADMINISTRATIVE DETAINEE Tal Yinon Dardik arrives at the Jerusalem District Court for a hearing on Central Command chief Maj.-Gen. Avi Bluth’s appeal against a decision to release him from administrative detention, yesterday. (Chaim Goldberg/Flash90)

security in the area.

Bluth subsequently revised the order, replacing the house-arrest requirement with a ban from the West Bank, except for Modi’in Illit. Dardik must report to a police station there twice a day. The military said the revised order will expire on the same date as the original and is an amendment rather than a new order.

Police prosecutors agreed that Dardik should be released but asked the Magistrate’s Court to make his release conditional on compliance with the revised military restrictions.

Shaked rejected that request, ruling that the new order could not supply grounds for detention in a criminal case concerning alleged violations of the previous one.

The cancellation of the requirement that Dardik stay at his mother-in-law’s home had significantly weakened the evidence supporting the charges against him, Shaked said. He found no sufficient evidentiary basis to keep Dardik detained until the conclusion of the proceedings.

The judge also criticized prosecutors for attempting to combine the criminal case with the separate administrative process. A court could not keep Dardik behind bars to prevent

a possible future violation of an order issued only while he was already detained, he ruled.

Shaked denied the prosecution’s request to delay Dardik’s release to allow time for an appeal, saying that such a delay would effectively prolong his detention, despite the state itself having requested his release.

Dardik told the court that the revised order had been read to him and that he was aware of its terms.

Honenu, the legal aid organization representing him, said Dardik had conducted a 38-day hunger strike during his detention. That figure and the details of the strike were supplied by the organization.

Honenu described the ruling as a victory and called for the cancellation of administrative detention orders against other Jewish settlers.

“We are pleased that the defense’s arguments from the outset were accepted,” attorney Nati Rom said. “There was no violation and no justification for his detention.”

Attorney Moshe Polsky accused the state of dragging Dardik through unnecessary proceedings, while Honenu called the use of administrative detentions against settlers a “black flag” and urged Bluth to cancel them.

IDF fires at Hamas sniper in Gaza, returns 3 Israelis who crossed into Syria

• Jerusalem Post Staff

IDF troops opened fire on a suspected Hamas sniper who posed an immediate threat near the Yellow Line in northern Gaza on Tuesday, as the military and police reported separate security incidents along the Syrian border and in the West Bank.

The troops identified a hit after firing at the man, the IDF said, without providing further details on his condition.

Southern Command troops remain deployed in the area under the ceasefire agreement and will continue to act against immediate threats, the military added.

The Yellow Line was established under the October 2025 ceasefire agreement as the boundary to which Israeli forces withdrew, initially leaving the IDF in control of roughly 53% of Gaza. It separates the Israeli-held area, largely in the east and south of the Strip, from the densely populated coastal area under Hamas control.

Israeli forces later pushed beyond the original boundary, with senior military officials telling the Security Cabinet in July that the IDF controlled between 67% and 70% of the Strip.

Senior officials from US President Donald Trump’s Board of Peace said this week, however, that the IDF had since returned to the original Yellow Line and no longer maintained troops or outposts beyond it.

The officials also said Israel had halted targeted killings and was observing the ceasefire in practice, despite Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s public rejection of the board’s proposed 15-point framework for Gaza.

Netanyahu has said the IDF will not withdraw further until Hamas is fully disarmed, while maintaining

that Israeli forces will continue to act against immediate threats to troops and civilians.

Elsewhere, three Israeli civilians crossed into Syrian territory near Mount Hermon overnight Tuesday before IDF troops located them and returned them to Israel, the military said. They were transferred to police custody for further handling.

The IDF condemned the crossing as a criminal act that disrupted military operations and endangered soldiers.

The incident was the latest in a series of similar breaches, largely involving activists seeking to establish Israeli settlements in Syrian territory.

Two Israelis were returned from Syria on July 27, three activists from the “HaBashan Pioneers” movement were detained after crossing near Mount Hermon on July 29, and another two civilians were returned by troops on July 30.

Military officials have warned that locating and retrieving civilians who cross the border diverts troops and surveillance resources from border-defense operations and puts both the civilians and the soldiers sent after them at risk.

In the West Bank, police arrested six young men on Tuesday on suspicion of attacking Border Police officers during an arrest operation nearly two months ago.

According to police, several people gathered and attacked the officers on June 14 as they attempted to arrest suspects allegedly involved in extremist investigations. The assailants then fled.

Investigators subsequently identified six suspects, aged 17 to 23, from the Samaria and Jordan Valley regions. They were arrested on Tuesday morning and taken for questioning.

Sarah Ben-Nun and Amichai Stein contributed to this report.

Ties reviving with Venezuela

• By AMICHAJ STEIN and Jerusalem Post Staff

Israel and Venezuela have agreed to renew consular relations and establish an official coordination channel after 17 years without diplomatic ties, the countries said in a joint announcement on Tuesday.

The move creates an official channel of coordination between Jerusalem and Caracas, which have not maintained diplomatic relations since 2009.

The agreement followed talks held in recent weeks between Foreign Minister Gideon Sa’ar

and Venezuelan Foreign Minister Félix Plasencia.

During the talks, the two sides agreed to establish a coordination mechanism enabling consular services to be provided to citizens of both countries. The statement also emphasized the importance of ties between the State of Israel and Venezuela’s Jewish community.

Israel and Venezuela agree to continue coordination after a massive earthquake.

Additionally, following the earthquake and the humanitarian crisis in Venezuela, the two countries also agreed to

continue cooperating on emergency response and recovery efforts. An Israeli delegation was deployed there in June and has since helped tens of thousands of Venezuelans return to their homes.

In its aftermath, officials estimated that at least 5,000 people died as a result of the June 24 earthquake.

The current Venezuelan government’s receipt of Israeli assistance contrasts with the complete cut-off in relations between the countries dating back to 2009.

Yonah Jeremy Bob contributed to this report.

West Bank home of terrorist who killed Yuval Ezra, Benayahu Mellet demolished

• By MIRIAM SELA-EITAM

IDF and Border Police officers destroyed the home of the terrorist who killed Maj. Yuval Ezra, 27, and Capt. (res.) Benayahu Mellet, 32, in an overnight operation in the village of Tel in the West Bank, the military announced on Tuesday afternoon.

Soldiers from the IDF’s Samaria Brigade and the Yahalom Combat Engineering Corps, as well as officers from the Border Police’s Judea and Samaria Brigade, took part in the operation.

Ezra and Mellet were killed during the July 24 West Bank attack near Gilad Farm,

a settlement located southwest of Nablus. Mellet was a member of Gilad Farm’s local emergency response squad and served in the reserves in regional defense. Ezra was an Artillery Corps battery commander who had returned to reinforce the sector after the military raised its level of readiness.

Last week, the IDF published the findings of its investigation into the military’s response to the attack and found significant operational and command failures.

The investigation found that the soldiers and local security personnel who entered the confrontation acted courageously and prevented further casualties but reached a

rapidly expanding violent incident with insufficient forces, an incomplete understanding of what was happening, and serious failures in command and medical evacuation.

Four Palestinians from the Ramadan family were also killed during the confrontation near the village of Tel, southwest of Nablus.

The IDF said Palestinian attackers were killed in the exchange, but the findings released last week did not detail the individual role of each of the four or explain the circumstances in which each was shot.

Sarah Ben-Nun and James Genn contributed to this report.

‘Israel must shift stance as Syria abandons nukes’

• By DANIELLE GREYMAN-KENNARD

Damascus’s reported willingness to allow the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to remove nuclear material from the Assad-era “Site 99” underscores why Israel’s security arrangements must extend beyond the military sphere to the diplomatic arena, Gil Murciano told *The Jerusalem Post* on Tuesday.

Murciano, the CEO of Mitvim and an expert on Israeli foreign and security policy, spoke with the *Post* after Axios reported that the Trump administration had orchestrated a diplomatic agreement to see nuclear material removed without Israeli attacks on the site.

The material, said to be leftover parts of the Al-Kibar nuclear reactor project, has reportedly not yet been removed. Though not capable of being used to produce nuclear weapons, Axios reported that it could have been utilized to make a “dirty bomb,” a radiological dispersal device (RDD) that combines conventional explosives with radioactive material.

A US official told Axios that Israel had threatened to bomb Site 99 if the material was not removed or if there was any indication that Damascus was trying to access the material, though sources claimed that few in Syria were even aware of its presence in the country.

Murciano said this was an example of why Israel should take a more active role in diplomacy, rather than relying exclusively on its military might and closest ally, Washington.

With Syria and Israel sharing many key security concerns, such as wanting to prevent the infiltration of Iran-aligned groups like Hezbollah, there is significant ground to hold discussions, even if interim Syrian President Ahmed al-Sharaa’s background makes him a difficult figure to trust.

Jerusalem has remained cautious since the hostile but predictable Assad regime fell in 2024. Sharaa’s history as a wanted jihadist and former leader of Hay’at Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) did little to ease Israeli concerns when he rose to power, while sectarian attacks against Syria’s Druze, Alawite, and Christian communities only fueled those fears.

“In Israel, we tend to look at Sharaa in an either-or, all-or-nothing way: either as the next great hope or as a jihadist in a suit, a kind of dichotomous perception of him as either a villain or a hero. I think that is a mistake,” Murciano explained, adding that it was becoming essential for Israel to cooperate with regional actors and “shape” the new roles and relationships within the region as an active member.

Far from suggesting Jerusalem should simply trust Damascus, Murciano said diplomacy could be based on shared goals and an understanding of what the other party is interested in, which in the case of Sharaa is legitimacy.

With that in mind, he said it was not surprising that Damascus would be willing to hand over the materials, although Jerusalem reportedly feared that Ankara was encouraging Damascus to retain the remnants.

Beyond Damascus, several potential international partners would be interested in ensuring nonproliferation in Syria, especially given the scale of chemical weapons manufactured and utilized by the Assad regime.

“The issue of non-proliferation is a very interesting topic that could be one of the topics that would enable Israel to join forces with other like-minded partners, even, in some cases, sides that are not in the greatest relationship right now with Israel,” he said.

While still in the crucial transitional phase, he continued, now is the time for Israel to shape the relationships and norms that will help solidify the future security of its northern border.

That relationship could either remain a hostile calm reliant on foreign actors to contain tensions, or develop into an active dialogue through which Jerusalem can translate military

achievements into long-term strategic gains, something critics have argued Israel has failed to do throughout the multiple wars of the past three years.

“If any withdrawal from Syrian territory is seen as completely off the table for political reasons by this government, then you are going to be in the passive role again. Instead of taking the initiative, you are going to respond to the lesser evil, and you are going to be the one responding to a reality that is being imposed upon you,” Murciano warned.

“That is exactly what happened to us in Lebanon, and that is exactly what is happening to us in Syria. Political considerations are preventing us from taking an initiative that is crucial to preserving Israel’s national security.

“Right now, all we can offer are military aspects. We have completely failed to offer any

form of political initiative, and national security cannot be served by these issues alone.”

OPERATION BASHAN ARROW was a major achievement for the IDF, enabling it to destroy around 80% of Syria’s Assad-era strategic military capabilities.

However, Murciano said that at some point, a political next step would be necessary. He argued that Israel’s continued military presence in Syria, intended to create a buffer zone, was instead fueling actions against the Jewish state and causing long-term damage to relations with a neighboring state that is not going anywhere.

Reports of clashes between US President Donald Trump and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu have periodically highlighted Washington’s frustration with what it sees as Jerusalem’s lack of flexibility and an

excessive reliance on military solutions to security threats.

In June, Axios reported that Trump had confronted Netanyahu over strikes in Lebanon, which had threatened the US’s talks with Iran. “Everybody hates Israel because of this,” Trump reportedly told the prime minister at the time.

Murciano said that Netanyahu’s government had “lost control” over decision-making on Iran, Syria, and Lebanon as a result of its “hawkish approach” and “its inability to offer anything on the political level, rejecting every initiative.”

“I’m not saying that we should accept every initiative brought to us on Syria, but we need to address them. We need to provide our reservations and offer our own initiatives, because this is already happening with us or without us,” he concluded. “The ship has already sailed.”



US PRESIDENT Donald Trump meets Syrian counterpart Ahmed al-Sharaa in the White House last year. (Syrian Presidency Press Office)

ISRAEL is a Miracle.

Celebrate it every day with our books

\$99
Special Price

Shipping included

Bring home an elegant
Jerusalem Post coffee table book
and delve into Israel’s inspiring journey.

Israel in Focus

The book includes hundreds of pictures from our archives that showcase how, decade after decade, Israel has been faced with many challenges and enemies, but it has always prevailed.

Front Page Israel

The book showcases Israel’s milestones through 90 years of our newspaper’s front pages, starting over 90 years ago, even before the State of Israel was founded.

THE JERUSALEM POST



Scan the QR code or call today for more information: Israel: *2423
USA: 1800-4489291
Other countries: +972-3-761-9037

EXPERT TELLS 'POST':

Regional ties could expand despite new threats

• By DANIELLE GREYMAN-KENNARD

Israel's approach to expanding relations with regional players must be one of "trust but verify," Jonathan Ghariani, a researcher at the Moshe Dayan Center for Middle Eastern and African Studies and coordinator of the Morocco-Israel Policy Forum, told *The Jerusalem Post* on Sunday. He was invoking the proverb popularized by US President Ronald Reagan during nuclear disarmament negotiations with the Soviet Union in the 1980s.

Ghariani offered an optimistic assessment of Jerusalem's diplomatic prospects, despite a recent KAN report suggesting that a country had been advised to reach an agreement with Israel to lull it into a false sense of security before launching an attack, as well as concerns that a new agreement between Turkey, Pakistan, and Saudi Arabia could spell disaster for Israel.

He argued that, despite statements by Pakistani officials blaming Israel for Iran's attacks on regional countries, the war had helped thaw some of the region's previously cool attitudes toward Israel, even if those developments remained

largely under the table.

Already tied to the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain by the Abraham Accords, he said Jerusalem's coordination with Abu Dhabi and Manama had only improved since March, and the benefits of that partnership were seen across the region. In July, Israeli officials confirmed reports that Israel had sent the UAE the Iron Dome battery and interceptors, allowing dozens of attacks by Iran to be quickly intercepted.

"The Abraham Accords have been a highly successful story. I believe that they will continue, and that the relationships between Israel and the signatories of the Abraham Accords will continue to grow," he said, adding that as the coordinator of the Morocco-Israel Forum he has seen achievements in the fields of academia and defense.

"Morocco and Israel are cooperating heavily in terms of weapons production facilities. There are actually plans for joint UAV production between Israel and Morocco. Morocco has also invited Israel to participate in several military drills. So, no, I'm confident that the relationship will continue to evolve, and we might actually see an expansion of the Abraham Accords."



A LARGE billboard that reads 'A time for war, a time for settlement. Now is the time for the Abrahamic Covenant,' in Tel Aviv, last year. (Yehoshua Yosef/Flash90)

Even Kuwait, he said, which has said it would be the last state to normalize ties with Israel, has started "changing" its outlook thanks to Iran's attacks.

THOUGH RIYADH denies the claim, Ghariani said Saudi Arabia had intercepted missiles aimed at Israel, arguing that such actions demonstrate the impact of the US-sponsored Middle East Air Defense Alliance, spearheaded by Benny Gantz in 2022. He said the initiative had already begun to

change regional perceptions of Israel now that its effects are being felt.

Speaking on the agreement between Saudi Arabia and two countries with hostile stances toward Israel, Ghariani said that the Mecca Joint Defense Agreement is not a "formal alliance" in his eyes, and he could not imagine Ankara or Riyadh being willing to fight against India on Pakistan's behalf. So far, notably, the signatories have not responded to recent attacks on Saudi Arabia.

With little action having fol-

lowed the defense pact, Ghariani said he doubted that the prospect of Saudi Arabia joining the Abraham Accords had completely evaporated, even if the political climate in neither Israel nor Saudi Arabia was yet conducive to such a move.

He said that the next generation, particularly Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, remained interested in such a development, although many of the older generation continued to uphold the demands outlined in the Arab Peace Initiative, including an Israe-

li withdrawal from the West Bank and east Jerusalem.

"The Saudis have taken steps in that direction. They have opened their airspace and actually allowed Israeli airliners to fly over Saudi territory, and they have even invited Israeli ministers to take part in international events," he said.

"So I don't know, but I'm confident it might happen at some point. There is a convergence of interests. Saudi Arabia still sees Iran as its primary enemy, its primary adversary."

Though unconcerned by Riyadh, Ghariani maintained that Turkey's expanding influence was concerning.

"Turkey could be a formidable threat in the future, potentially more formidable than Iran because it is a NATO ally and has one of the strongest militaries in the world," he said. "... Turkey is actually taking advantage of the situation, and it is indeed trying to become the hegemon in the Middle East, especially starting with Syria. But would an open conflict actually happen between Israel and Turkey? I doubt it at this stage."

Advising that Qatar, a "wild card," should remain firmly on Israel's radar, Ghariani said Doha's close ties with the Mus-

lim Brotherhood and continued relations with Iran, despite its attacks, make it a country whose influence Israel should monitor carefully, particularly given its status as one of Washington's closest non-NATO allies.

"We can see the emergence of this kind of Qatar-Turkey axis taking shape and spreading its influence in Gaza, with Hamas, but also in Syria, and that is indeed a very worrying phenomenon," he said.

"Qatar also maintains very strong ties with the United States. It is a major non-NATO ally, and it hosts the largest US military base in the region. This is indeed quite alarming. The fact that they have so much influence in terms of policy, while at the same time they have been hit hard by an Iranian missile barrage but continue to maintain relations with Iran, is indeed a worrying phenomenon."

Beyond hedging bets as other states have attempted by establishing new partnerships, Qatar and Turkey have been working to expand their "nefarious" influence and "spread their ideology" across the Middle East, perhaps threatening the progress Israel is making, he concluded.

New defense pact partners didn't rush to Saudi Arabia's aid after Houthi strike

ANALYSIS

• By ZVIKA KLEIN

The fire at the Aramco refinery in Jizan started Sunday morning. Yahya Saree, the Houthi military spokesman, said his forces had hit it with a drone, precisely, in retaliation for Saudi drones over Saada and Hajjah. The Saudi Ministry of Energy confirmed the fire and said it was extinguished.

Forty-eight hours earlier, Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, and Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif had stood together in Mecca and signed an agreement stating that an armed attack on any one of their countries would be regarded as an attack on all three.

Yet Turkey said nothing. Pakistan said nothing. There was never any reason to think otherwise.

Israeli commentary reached for the largest available frames: an Islamic NATO, a Sunni axis, a Pakistani nuclear umbrella over the kingdom. The Prime Minister's Office declined to comment at all. The pact deserves neither's response.

The joint statement says the agreement strengthens collective deterrence against aggression. The text has not been published, so everything written about the pact rests on what officials choose to describe.

Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan has described it the most. He told Anadolu news agency that the collective-defense clause is technically comparable to NATO's Article 5, and named the institutions: a ministerial committee and a permanent secretariat in Saudi Arabia. Then he added the part almost nobody covered.

If one member is attacked, the others consult to determine the nature and scale of any assistance. Consultation is what NATO members do too. It is also what they did in February 2003, when three of them blocked planning for Turkey's own defense before the Iraq war.

Riyadh has run this experiment once already. Its defense agreement with Pakistan was signed in September 2025, days after the Israeli strike on Hamas figures in Doha, and both capitals say it obliges each to defend the other.

When the United States and Israel began striking Iran on February 28, Riyadh called it in. Reuters reported in May, citing five Pakistani and Saudi sources, that Pakistan sent roughly 8,000 troops, some 16 aircraft – mostly JF-17s, two squadrons of drones, and a Chi-



BILLBOARDS DISPLAY the Mecca Joint Defense Agreement in Karachi, Pakistan, on Sunday. (Akhtar Soomro/Reuters)

nese-built HQ-9 battery. Pakistanis operate the equipment. Saudi Arabia pays for it. Two of those sources said the role was mainly advisory and training.

IRAN SPENT the months that followed hitting Saudi refineries and American aircraft parked at Prince Sultan Air Base. Two Saudi civilians were killed. The Pakistani squadron stayed where it was, and Islamabad carried on hosting talks between Washington and Tehran.

Mecca turns that arrangement into an institution: foreign hardware on Saudi soil, Saudi money paying for it, foreign crews operating it, and no obligation on anyone to fire. A senior Israeli official, asked privately about the Pakistani element, described it in narrow terms. He is right about the military content. The reason to watch this is political.

Fidan also let a date slip. Preparations, he said, ran nearly two years and eight months, putting the start around December 2023. They began building this while Israeli forces were in Khan Yunis, long before the first Iranian missile landed on Saudi soil.

The claim that Egypt is joining deserves less confidence than it has received. Fidan said Cairo will come in once technical issues are settled and called it a natural partner. Mada Masr, citing Egyptian and regional sources, reported that Egypt was invited and refused, unwilling to enter a bloc drafted in Riyadh. In May, Egyptian fighter jets flew to Abu Dhabi, not to Jeddah.

None of which makes the pact benign. The day after the signing, Pakistan's defense minister, Khawaja Asif, called Israel a threat to

the entire Muslim world and urged a united military front against it. He said his position would hold regardless of who won on October 27.

Asif has previously implied that Pakistan's nuclear guarantee covers Saudi Arabia, a claim no published text supports. He does not speak for Riyadh. He does sit inside the arrangement, and within a day he had handed it the enemy its drafters were careful not to name.

For a decade, Israeli planning assumed a chain: Iran frightened the Arabs, fear sent them to Washington; Washington routed them through Jerusalem, normalization followed. Israel's place in it rested on being the only address for what Riyadh wanted.

The crown prince now has a second address. It cannot defend him as Sunday showed. It can be photographed and pointed at, and unlike normalization it costs him nothing at home.

Yoel Guzansky, head of the Gulf Research Program at the Institute for National Security Studies (INSS), told this paper the agreement "doesn't shut the door completely" on normalization. He is right, and the July civil nuclear agreement with Washington, which President Donald Trump says is conditioned on Saudi accession to the Abraham Accords, is the door.

A refinery fire in Jizan was never going to move Turkish or Pakistani forces. The question the pact has not yet been asked is about what happens when something larger is hit and whether Riyadh would want the clause invoked even then, or would prefer to keep it exactly where it is now, useful and untested.

A BLOCKADE IS WORSE THAN WAR

Iranian trade official says US economic blockade would cost Tehran \$18b.

• By DANIELLE GREYMAN-KENNARD

The ongoing American blockade of the Strait of Hormuz is going to cost the Iranian economy around \$18 billion annually, Majidreza Hariri, head of the Iran-China Joint Chamber of Commerce, warned the Iranian media site Khabar Online earlier this week.

"We must not get used to the blockade as we did with sanctions," he told the site. "We should impose the cost of lifting the blockade on the US, even through war."

Hariri advised that Iran end the blockade by any means necessary, whether through negotiations, threats, or renewing the war, the site reported. His comments came after Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian had reportedly begun advocating adopting a strategy to circumvent the naval blockade.

Iran has notably invested in major infrastructure to increase truck-based trade, raising the current level of bilateral trade from \$3 billion to at least \$10b., according to statements made by Iranian Interior Minister Eskandar Momeni last month.

Despite this investment, Hariri said that relying solely on land trade would mean restricting Iran's import and export capacity to only 20%, and Iran lacks "appropriate relations" to trade with many of its neighbors.

Though not expanded upon, Hariri's comments likely allude to the fact that Iran has launched attacks on its Gulf neighbors' critical infrastructure in addition to the United States military infrastructure housed there.

Based on Hariri's calculation, a container shipped from China to Iran would cost four times as much to transport by land as by sea, reaching an average price of around \$12,000. With around two million containers imported annually, and an average additional cost of \$9,000, he said this would translate to around \$18b. in additional costs for Iranians.

"The worst thing that could happen today is for us to think that we can circumvent the naval blockade and try to

run the country despite it," he said. "We did something similar with the sanctions. Instead of lifting them or finding mechanisms to neutralize them, we turned to circumventing the sanctions, and the result was a weakened economy and major corruption."

Hariri added that the cost of land transit would also mean non-oil exports – which he valued at around \$50b. annually – would no longer be economically viable.

"The naval blockade will create fundamental challenges for the country, and if it continues, the country's economy will grind to a halt. Our total foreign trade is \$100b. a year, and adding \$20b. in costs to it would bring the entire process to a standstill," he said.

"Perhaps in the short term, for several weeks or at most a few months, we could use rail and roads to obtain urgent necessities, but this would only work as a necessary measure during a short-term emergency. This is simply about staying alive, but with this approach, the ability to continue operating will be lost."

He added that the sanctions had already "dramatically increased the costs of our trade, reduced national revenues, and caused the economy to develop an exhausted structure," and that attempts to circumvent them had led to corruption.

"With the blockade, these developments will occur on a scale several times larger if we convince ourselves that we can circumvent it. We must not allow our economy, or the enemy, to get used to our naval blockade," he said.

Hariri said that even if it came to "pleading" or renewed war, "this naval blockade must end," as the consequences of war wouldn't come close to the economic problems and goods shortages that will result from the continued blockade.

"We must also eliminate the perception in the US that it can resort to such an action whenever it wants, and make it understand that the consequences of such a move could be severe," he advised.

Trump's most effective weapon against Tehran is to choke its economy

ANALYSIS

• By IDAN KWELLER

After months of war, strikes, threats, and negotiations that have so far failed to end the ongoing conflict, US President Donald Trump is returning to one of the oldest tools in the United States' arsenal against Iran: choking it economically.

According to a report from *The Wall Street Journal*, Trump has for now adopted a "wait and see" strategy, giving financial sanctions and the US naval blockade of Iranian ports more time to deepen the damage to the Islamic Republic's economy instead of launching another broad round of strikes.

According to the report, the shift followed persuasion efforts within the administra-

tion. Trump's aides presented him with data intended to show the extent to which existing sanctions have already hurt Iran.

Senior administration and White House officials have recommended tightening the current sanctions further and imposing new ones, based on the assessment that economic pressure could be the most effective way to force the Iranian regime to back down.

Trump, at least for now, was persuaded, and he told his advisers that he would prefer not to order additional strikes.

He publicly announced the return to this approach on Monday, telling reporters that Iran has "no money," and "Iran is broke, completely broke."

US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent said last month that the administration's eco-

nomics policy had sent the Iranian currency into "free fall" and pushed inflation into triple-digit rates.

The decision to pursue the economic sanctions route comes as Trump currently has reservations about the two other options available to him. He is reluctant to return to an all-out war, but he is also wary of another round of negotiations with Tehran.

In recent days, talks surrounding the Strait of Hormuz have once again become complicated after Iran presented far-reaching demands in exchange for fully reopening the shipping route, including billions of dollars in US payments, the lifting of the blockade, and the withdrawal of American forces from the region.

From the White House's perspective, the

sanctions strategy offers another advantage: It allows Washington to maintain heavy pressure on Tehran without immediately entering a new military round that could drive up energy prices and trigger an Iranian response against infrastructure in the Gulf.

Former senior officials described this as the "optimal space" for the United States, provided that increasing amounts of oil can continue to reach the market despite the threats.

According to one, a bad agreement could effectively subsidize Iran's reconstruction, while a major military escalation could shock the oil market if the regime survives the strikes and retaliates against energy infrastructure in the Gulf.

Economic pressure, however, also comes

with risks. Experts who served in previous US administrations warned that an American blockade could further worsen Iran's already difficult economic situation, and that this could make a response from Tehran more likely, as "no one should expect Iran to simply sit idly by while this is happening."

That is also the main vulnerability of the renewed strategy. It rests on the assumption that economic pain will force Tehran to yield before it chooses to escalate militarily.

US officials stressed that Trump could still change his mind, particularly in the event of a severe Iranian response. For now, however, the president is choosing to give time, sanctions, and the blockade a chance to do the work instead of aircraft and bombs.

Billionaire envisions Mideast parliament in Israel

INTERVIEW
• By ZVIKA KLEIN

For about 20 years, Joseph (Joe) J. Sitt, the chairman and CEO of the New York real estate firm Thor Equities, has been paying to restore Jewish graves in Syria, Algeria, Egypt, Lebanon, and Turkey, along with synagogues in those countries that are ancient enough to predate the destruction of the Second Temple. He rarely talks about it publicly. When I asked him why he does it, he answered with a question of his own.

“People always have respect for their parents’ graves and their grandparents’ graves,” he said. “But why should their great-grandparents’ graves be nothing to them? And why should the ruins of the Second Temple be more important than the synagogues of the same period or older?”

That work, spread across two decades and half a dozen countries, has given Sitt something most American Jewish businessmen do not have, which is a working relationship with the people who run those countries. He has decided what he wants to do with it. He wants the Abraham Accords to stop being a set of agreements and become an actual institution, with a building, a staff, and an address in Jerusalem.

“Why can’t we have a Brussels-like headquarters of an alliance organization, an Abraham Accords organization, that’s that unifier in the Middle East and be based in Jerusalem?” he asked me over Teams last week.

I asked whether he meant that as an image or as a construction project.

“Actually and physically,” he said.

He calls it the Abraham Organization, and he is deliberate about dropping the word “accord.” “It’s not just a piece of [the] accords,” he said. “It’s the next evolution.” The name itself is the point. Abraham, he said, was the forefather of both the Muslim and Arab world and of the Jewish and Israeli one. When I pointed out that Christians claim him too, he agreed immediately.

The kid from the race-track parking lot

Sitt, decades later, is married and the father of four. He grew up in Brooklyn near Coney Island. His first job in business was working flea market booths in the parking lots of the Aqueduct and Roosevelt racetracks. His first property was bought at a tax auction on East Tremont Avenue in the Bronx, in a stretch of the city that national chains had given up on. He raised the money from family and friends, put up a one-story retail building, and talked Rite Aid and Payless into signing leases.

He was still an undergraduate at New York University’s Stern School of Business when he founded Thor Equities in 1986. Somewhere in there, he also built a string of consumer brands, among them Ashley Stewart, a plus-size clothing chain aimed primarily at Black women in neighborhoods the mall retailers ignored, and staffed its senior management almost entirely with Black executives.

Thor today runs about \$20 billion for sovereign wealth funds, government agencies, and private investors, with more than 50 million square feet in its development pipeline and offices in New York, London, Paris, Madrid, Mexico City, San Francisco, and Miami. It has owned London’s Burlington Arcade and Chicago’s Palmer House Hilton. Its Mexico-focused Latin American arm, Thor Urbana, calls itself the largest developer in that country. In 2012, Sitt put millions of dollars of his own money into founding the Global Gateway Alliance, a nonprofit set up to draw a development plan and push New York and the US federal government into fixing the city’s airports.

None of which explains why he thinks he should be the one to lead the effort to house the Abraham Accords. His answer to that is about who he is, and it is more complicated than his last name suggests.

Not exactly a Syrian Jew

In Israel, and increasingly in the United States, the Syrian Jewish community of



JOSEPH (JOE) J. SITT, the chairman and CEO of the New York real estate firm Thor Equities. (Courtesy)

Brooklyn is treated as a bloc: wealthy, cohesive, and politically confident. Sitt’s name gets attached to it automatically. He pushed back on that before I could ask about it.

“I don’t want to overposition myself as purely a Syrian Jew,” he said. “I’m a little bit of a hybrid. I straddle. I’m also part of that community, but I’m also part of the global Jewish community.”

Half of his Jewish friends, he said, are Ashkenazi. Part of his family came from Spain and the Canary Islands. His parents sent him to Yeshiva of Flatbush, an Ashkenazi school, rather than to one of the Syrian community’s own institutions, a choice he says was meant to give him that diversity at a young age. He has spent his life half inside and half outside, which is more or less the qualification for the side job he has created for himself.

“If there was a country called Jewish, I would be honored to be the ambassador from that country to the Arab world,” he said.

What the Emiratis tell him

The Middle East, and specifically the Gulf, is where

Sitt’s relationships are most concrete. He is closest to the Emiratis. Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, the UAE’s deputy prime minister and minister of foreign affairs and a brother of President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, is a personal friend. Sitt calls him a mentor and describes him as a fine, loving, wise man he wishes he could see more often.

He knows the argument against taking any of this at face value. Abu Dhabi keeps its channels open to Iran, to China, to Russia. It is a small country and it needs to balance.

“I think that they’ve been a real friend of Israel,” he said anyway. The Emiratis, in his account, are genuinely comfortable with other religions and genuinely want the region calm. He is close to people in Oman, Bahrain, Syria, and Saudi Arabia as well, and less so in Iran.

Why do they take his calls? He says it is because he never asks them for anything. He does charity in the Arab world the same way he does it in the Jewish one. “People see that I’m sincere.”

The plot of land

What Sitt actually wants from Israel is real estate, which is at least on brand. He thinks the government could donate a plot in Jerusalem for the headquarters.

His original plan put the building in Tel Aviv. Then someone inside the Israeli government, whom he would not name, came to him with a modification of his idea and argued for Jerusalem. Sitt was persuaded. “Jerusalem is the answer for an Abraham organization,” he said.

The organization he sketches is meant for the neighborhood, not for its sponsors. “The goal for the organization is not to necessarily be an organization for the French or necessarily for the Americans. It’s for the Middle East region,” he said. The Americans hold everyone’s hands at the start and then let go. “At a certain point, have America then step back, and let them stand on their own two feet.”

I asked whether he wants to run it, fund it, or both. He would not say. What he offered instead was a pitch built on everything he is not.

“I’m not a politician. The fact that I have no politics,

no connection to a politician, no family member that’s a politician, it makes me that independent arbiter,” he said. “Sometimes, it takes somebody from the outside that’s motivated, that cares, that’s more independent.”

Betting on the businessmen

Sitt is one of the few people willing to go on record predicting that the businessmen now doing Middle East diplomacy will succeed at it. Two of them sit on the Gaza Executive Board under US President Donald Trump’s Board of Peace: Yakir Gabay, the Israeli-Cypriot founder and chairman of the property group Aroundtown, and Marc Rowan, the co-founder and CEO of Apollo Global Management.

“I think that Yakir Gabay and Marc Rowan, which you can quote me on, are going to be incredibly successful with the Board of Peace,” he said. “I know everybody’s saying no, and there are the naysayers, but I think they’re going to be incredibly successful because they think as business people.”

The Carlyle Group and Blackstone have been hiring former officials for years, he pointed out. Nobody has seriously tried it the other way. “You could have the same success in the reverse, but it’s never been tested before.”

He once asked Jared Kushner, Trump’s son-in-law and the White House adviser who brokered the original accords, how he had done it. Kushner told him it was listening. Sitt believes him.

Israel as the next theme

Thor does not pick buildings; it picks themes, and it holds them for 10 or 15 years before switching. Not asset classes and not bargains.

“Most people buy because the deal is cheap or based upon an asset class they do, maybe because their father did or their grandfather did,” Sitt said. “We’re much more thematic investors, and we pick themes globally that we believe in.” The themes come out of politics and demographics.

The current one is data centers. Thor moved its investors’ money out of office buildings and into these centers well before anyone was saying artificial intelligence (AI) in an earnings call. The first was in Madrid. Now there is Texas, Ohio, Georgia, and a European pipeline.

He would like Israel to be one of the next themes. He is having trouble getting in.

‘It’s like a club’

Here is where Sitt got sharp, and it was not about Iran or Gaza. It was about Israeli businessmen.

“Israelis at the highest level often live in a little bit of a bubble,” he said. “It’s like a club. Why? You should want to connect with the outside world. It’s an opportunity to do business, help Israel go global as well. And I find it surprising that they really don’t.”

He says the wealthiest Jews outside Israel have almost no real relationship with the wealthiest people inside it, and that the gap genuinely surprised him when he first noticed it. He first helped a friend who runs forums in Israel that put religious and secular business figures in the same room, and went on from there to connect Israeli and non-Israeli Jewish CEOs. He gets a steady stream of requests from Israelis wanting introductions abroad. He has a long list of Israeli names he has connected to global networks, but asked me not to print them.

He has a stake in this, and he said so without being asked. Thor’s investor base includes sovereign funds and family fortunes from most of the developed world and almost nothing from Israel.

“I’m a little bit embarrassed that we don’t have the investor base from Israel also, yet,” he said. “One of the things I’d love to see is more Israeli investors also be our partner.”

About Israel, he had no hesitation at all. “Israel just went through hell and back,” he said. “But I’m bullish. No industrialized Western nation has better future demographics than Israel does. I’m very bullish on Israel.”

CENTCOM chief Cooper vows enduring US support for Israel

EXCLUSIVE
• Jerusalem Post Staff

“We achieved the unimaginable together. Our joint achievement is historic,” US Central Command (CENTCOM) chief Adm. Brad Cooper told senior IDF commanders on Monday in remarks obtained exclusively by *The Jerusalem Post*.

“You are a nation of warriors, and the people sitting here are the leaders of those warriors,” Cooper told the officers. “I am proud to serve shoulder to shoulder with you.”

Cooper also delivered a direct message about the future of the US-Israel military relationship.

“We have a high and enduring commitment to you,” he said.

According to a source familiar with the closed forum, Cooper said that many countries speak about allies fighting “shoulder to shoulder,” but that in the case of the US and Israel, the phrase described an operational reality.

The source described Cooper’s appearance as historic, saying it was highly unusual for a CENTCOM commander to address an IDF operational forum of this kind.

The gathering, led by IDF Chief of Staff Lt.-Gen. Eyal Zamir, included senior IDF officers and operational commanders from the rank of lieutenant-colonel and above, among them battalion commanders and squadron commanders who had taken part in the war.

The commanders received a multi-front operational and intelligence briefing, includ-

ing a review of developments during the war and Israel’s achievements against Iran. Zamir also delivered an extensive assessment of the current strategic situation.

Cooper’s closed-door comments were stronger and more personal than the remarks included in the IDF’s official statement on the meeting.

The IDF said Cooper reviewed the deepening strategic partnership between the US and Israeli militaries, saying that cooperation between the two had repeatedly proven itself throughout the campaign.

According to the military, Cooper stressed that the partnership was based on trust, commitment and close cooperation, and had become an important element in strengthening regional security and stability.

Zamir thanked Cooper for the close cooperation between the militaries and presented him with a gift. He described cooperation with the US military as “unprecedented” and called it a “strategic anchor.”

“We are in a significant period and at a strategic crossroads,” Zamir told the forum.

“The IDF is a fighting military, and we are engaged in a large, prolonged, multi-front campaign. Our mission is to influence reality and not be dragged behind it, through tactical and systemic initiative.”

Zamir said diplomatic negotiations were currently taking place in several of Israel’s main theaters and linked those talks directly to the IDF’s military achievements.

“All of these are the result

of the IDF’s historic achievements,” he said. “We must ensure that we fully realize the achievements of the campaign and maximize them.”

“We are well prepared on defense, alongside immediate readiness and alertness for a return to high-intensity fighting.”

Zamir told commanders that the IDF was carrying out what he described as a systematic and structured plan for victory.

“Since October 7, the IDF has proven itself as a victorious military, with a spirit of strength; an offensive and initiating military,” he said.

“The achievements we have made on all fronts are first and foremost your achievements,” Zamir told the commanders, referring to troops and personnel across the ground forces, navy, air force, intelligence, communications, logistics, and administration.

“Together, you led the IDF to significant achievements and changed the security reality.”

Zamir said the military was now in an interim period and warned commanders against allowing forces to lose their readiness.

“Alongside the desire to allow forces to refresh, we must not lose vigilance,” he said.

“We are required to maintain high readiness, be prepared for a rapid return to high-intensity fighting, respond quickly to every development and continue protecting our citizens.”

“The challenge now is to continue shaping reality, build the force and ensure that the IDF is prepared for every scenario,” Zamir said.

FORMER CHIEF COHEN: BOMBING WAS ‘FULFILLMENT OF ALL DREAMS’

• By ELI ASHKENAZI

The Mossad toured the Fordow nuclear site “many times” in order to understand it, former spy chief Yossi Cohen revealed at the Galilee Conference on Tuesday.

It remains unclear whether Cohen was referring to agents physically present within the facility or to remote monitoring.

Fordow’s “bombing by the Americans is the fulfillment of all my dreams,” Cohen added.

Regarding reports that the Iranians are approaching a nuclear weapons breakout, Cohen stated that “uranium enriched to 60% is still far from a bomb.”

As noted, the Fordow nuclear enrichment site, which is buried in a mountainous area, was attacked by the Americans during Operation Rising Lion. At the time, the Islamic Republic’s Atomic Energy Organization said the damage caused was “limited.”

“Limited damage was caused to several areas at the Fordow enrichment site, and we had already removed a significant portion of the equipment and materials. Therefore, there was no extensive damage, and there are no concerns about contamination,” said Behrouz

Kamalvandi, deputy head and spokesman of the organization.

However, *The Jerusalem Post* is aware that the IDF has capabilities that could cause cave-ins at Fordow, which lies underneath a mountain. Additionally, initial estimates made known to the *Post* in March estimated that Fordow could be destroyed.

However, due to the site’s location and construction, it might be unclear for a while what the true extent of the deal. Some Israeli officials told the *Post* they believe Fordow was destroyed, while others said caution should be the rule until confirmation.

According to Kamalvandi, the enrichment complex at Natanz was damaged mainly in its above-ground sections. He stressed that because most of the facilities are located underground, there was only a small amount of leakage inside that did not spread outside.

The senior agency official also said that minor damage was caused to the nuclear complex in Isfahan. He said there were no casualties in the strikes at any of the nuclear facilities and stressed that wherever damage was caused, “we will rebuild them in a much better way.”

Many believed that Israeli attacks on Natanz and Isfahan in the 2025 war would set Iran’s nuclear program back anywhere from six months to two years or more.



A SATELLITE image shows the Fordow nuclear facility in Iran last year. (Maxar Technology/Handout via Reuters)

Vermont shul co-hosts fundraiser for Mahdawi

• By ALEX CARSON

Beth Jacob Synagogue, an inclusive community in Montpelier, Vermont, joined forces with the Unitarian Universalist Church of Montpelier on Sunday to co-host a fundraising event supporting Mohsen Mahdawi, a Columbia University student and pro-Palestinian activist facing ongoing deportation proceedings.

According to the event listing published on the synagogue's website, the gathering at the church featured Mahdawi speaking on updates regarding his legal case, alongside guest speakers, such as constitutional lawyer and civil rights scholar David Cole; Harvard Divinity School Jewish studies professor, Shaul Magid; NOFA Vermont executive director, Grace Oedel; Vermont-NEA member benefits director, Mark Hage; Middlebury College visiting professor, Eric Levi Jacobson; and Unitarian Universalist Church minister, Rev. Joan Javier-Duval.

Proceeds from the gathering were designated directly for Mahdawi's legal defense fund.

The event, however, drew criticism within the community.

Investigative journalists Vermont-based Rachel Feldman and UK-based David Collier published extensive findings in April 2025 and again in August 2026, detailing Mahdawi's background, which raised serious concerns regarding the Jewish institution's decision to lend its platform and credibility to his defense.

Mahdawi's legal battles began in April 2025, when US Immi-

gration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents detained him at a US Citizenship and Immigration Services office in Colchester, Vermont, while he was attending a pre-scheduled appointment for his naturalization test.

Rather than facing criminal charges, Mahdawi has been targeted under a rarely used provision of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 USC Section 1227(a)(4)(C)(i)), which allows the secretary of state to initiate removal proceedings against a non-citizen whose presence or activities are determined to carry potentially serious adverse foreign policy consequences.

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio invoked this provision, citing Mahdawi's campus activism and pro-Palestinian protests at Columbia University following the October 7, 2023, attacks.

Mahdawi's detention sparked immediate legal and political challenges. While federal district judges initially intervened to secure his release from custody, the legal landscape shifted significantly in mid-2026.

The Board of Immigration Appeals ruled that the government had provided sufficient evidentiary backing for his removal, and an immigration judge officially ordered his deportation to Jordan in June 2026.

Mahdawi subsequently appealed the decision to the US Court of Appeals, while federal appeals panels reinstated aspects of the government's authority regarding his custody status.

While Mahdawi's supporters



PRO-PALESTINIAN activists rally for Mohsen Mahdawi and protest against deportations outside of ICE Headquarters in New York City last year. (Adam Gray/Getty Images)

have widely portrayed him as a progressive student leader, targeted for exercising his freedom of speech, investigative work by Collier and Feldman paints a portrait that contrasts sharply with that narrative.

According to Collier and Feldman's findings, the autobiographical personal narrative Mahdawi has shared across various media outlets, including CBS's *60 Minutes* and publications, contains significant factual inconsistencies when cross-referenced against historical records from the Second Intifada, such as B'Tselem casualty databases and weekly updates from the Palestinian Centre for Human Rights.

Specifically, the investigators claim to have found that Mahdawi's accounts regarding childhood incidents, such as the reported death of a best friend and the circumstances surrounding family members killed during the conflict, did not match recorded historical events, noting instead that the relatives he mourned were active combatants killed while launching attacks against Israeli forces, rather than innocent civilians.

Furthermore, the investigative reports uncovered extensive online activity from a public Facebook group created and managed by Mahdawi alongside his mother, Abeer Shamali.

The digital record documents content stretching from 2012 through 2014.

This coincides with the period Mahdawi was preparing to relocate to the United States, wherein he and his family systematically promoted a program titled "In the House of a Fighter," glorifying and honoring individuals linked to Palestinian terrorist organizations, including members of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) and al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade.

Among the material highlighted in the investigation was a video posted to Mahdawi's group featuring his mother participating in the infamous

"Khaybar, Khaybar, ya yahud, Jaish Muhammad soufa ya'oud" (Khaybar, Khaybar, oh Jews, the army of Muhammad will return) chant, a slogan apparently threatening violence against Jewish people.

AS DOCUMENTED in Collier and Feldman's investigation, the decision by the Beth Jacob Social Action Committee to co-host the fundraiser and invite Mahdawi for a pre-event discussion triggered immediate pushback among some of its own membership.

When concerned congregants circulated the researchers' findings across the synagogue's internal mailing lists, leadership faced mounting pressure to address the red flags surrounding the event.

According to the published investigative records, rather than engaging with the documented evidence, prominent supporters within the synagogue sought to deflect criticism. Eric Jacobson, a synagogue member and scheduled speaker at the fundraiser, dismissed Collier's investigative credentials and questioned the researchers' linguistic proficiency in Arabic.

In subsequent email exchanges documented in the reports, Jacobson questioned whether Collier was on the payroll of Israel's National Security Ministry.

The investigative files further detailed that when concerns continued to mount regarding hosting an individual associated with the glorification of terrorism, synagogue leadership ultimately postponed an initial in-house reception.

Writing on behalf of the Social Action Committee, organizer Alice Silverman acknowledged that members had significant concerns, but explicitly stated that an event to address those issues "would serve a very different purpose than what we are hoping and planning for on August 9, which is to show our full support."

Collier and Feldman claim in their report that attempts by independent researchers and concerned members to open a dialogue with synagogue organizers were met with institutional resistance.

According to the journalists, leadership demonstrated no interest in discussing the documented evidence, choosing instead to push forward with an unconditional expression of solidarity for Mahdawi while attempting to silence internal dissent.

Feldman informed *The Jerusalem Post* in a statement, "There is more about Mr. Mahdawi that has yet to come to light."

"Despite the voluminous amount of local backlash I've received since we published, I'd rather keep the community informed and be hated for it than let them blindly cheer for someone whom I firmly believe has no good intentions for Vermonsters or Americans."

In a statement to the *Post*, the Beth Jacob Board said: "The Beth Jacob Synagogue Board supported our Social Action Committee's request to help organize a fundraiser for a Vermont resident, Mohsen Mahdawi, because we believe the US government has violated his rights to free speech and due process."

DSA co-chair defends Oct. 8 rally at Times Square in 'New Yorker' interview

• By ALEX CARSON

Democratic Socialists of America (DSA) co-chair Megan Romer said in an interview last Friday with *The New Yorker* editor David Remnick that she "probably would have" attended the October 8, 2023, pro-Palestine rally in New York City and said the events of October 7 had been "largely inevitable."

During the interview, the discussion turned toward the October 7 massacre and the subsequent demonstrations showing solidarity with the Hamas-led attack in New York.

Remnick asked Romer whether she would have participated in the protest held in Times Square, noting that it took place just one day after the attacks, and asked her directly: "One day after the slaughter of 1,200 people and the taking of over 200 hostages, you would have come and rallied behind Hamas?" Romer responded by saying that she "probably would have" attended the demonstration.

Romer defended her perspective by adding, "I think that October 7 was largely inevitable. If you put people in an open-air concentration camp and you deprive them of rights, of dignity, of food, of the ability to live in safety, you have to expect that they are going to not take that for that long. And that is not defending any harm of civilians or of non-combatants."

When Remnick pushed back by noting, "Well, sure it is, you said you're supporting it," Romer replied, "I'm saying that I think it was inevitable. I think that you cannot put people in a cage and expect them not to revolt."

In another portion of the interview, the conversation shifted to the status of human rights and regional dynamics. Addressing the status of LGBTQ+ rights in the region, Romer said she "would not call Hamas queer-friendly," but also added that she "would not say that you can get a lot of social rights when you're under siege."

When questioned about historical diplomatic efforts, specifically regarding the 2000 Camp David proposal that sought to establish a Palestinian state alongside



PEOPLE RALLY in support of Palestinians in Times Square in New York on October 8, 2023. (Bryan R. Smith/AFP via Getty Images)

Israel, Romer stated she did not know the specifics of the proposal.

Expanding on the broader platform and policies of the DSA, Romer also addressed the organization's geopolitical stance. She said that any US defense or economic support for Israel represents a "solid redline" for the DSA.

Furthermore, she noted that the group supports "a free Palestine with the capital in Jerusalem," acknowledging that the stance could "be safely read as a one-state solution."

The interview drew scrutiny and criticism from the Anti-Defamation League, which published a detailed response addressing Romer's remarks on X/Twitter.

Opening its statement, the ADL said that it was a "jaw-dropping interview" that "should concern every American because this kind of hateful and demonizing rhetoric against the only Jewish state in the world goes well beyond criticism of a government or its policies, and it puts every Jewish American at risk. We've seen this far too often."

The organization emphasized that Romer's refusal to denounce Hamas meant shielding a US-designated foreign terrorist organization responsible for the deadliest massacre of Jews since the Holocaust, whose charter explicitly calls for the destruction of Israel, noting that she had previously urged followers to "read on,"

to learn "why we do not, in fact, condemn Hamas."

Continuing its breakdown of the interview, the ADL added, "She also called the Hamas-led October 7 massacre a mere 'revolt' and 'largely inevitable.' There is no justification for rape, kidnapping, torture, and slaughter."

Addressing Romer's remarks on LGBT rights and regional policy, the ADL pushed back against her attempt to contextualize the terror group's record, stating: "Let's be very clear: Hamas does not persecute LGBTQ+ people because of a conflict. It does so because persecution of LGBTQ+ people is a core part of its ideology, whether it fits the DSA and Romer's narrative or not."

Regarding Romer's stance on a one-state solution, the ADL criticized her unfamiliarity with historical efforts, writing: "The co-chair of an organization constantly calling for a 'free Palestine' and who claims Palestinian people are 'in a cage,' does not know the basic diplomatic history of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and yet, she thinks she's a legitimate commentator."

The organization also argued that the DSA's vision for a single-state outcome leaves no room for Jews' self-determination in their ancestral homeland.

Jonathan Greenblatt, CEO of the ADL, concluded the response by writing on X, "When people and groups tell you who they are, believe them."

'This is Tehran': Khamenei posters and Iran regime flags displayed at London march

• By MATHILDA HELLER

Open displays of support for the Islamic Regime in Iran were seen throughout Sunday's Arbaeen Procession in London.

The Arbaeen Procession is an annual public march held to commemorate Imam Hussain ibn Ali, the grandson of Prophet Muhammad, who was martyred in Karbala, Iraq, in 680 CE.

Arbaeen marks the 40th day after his martyrdom, and is designed to remember his alleged stand against oppression and injustice. For those who cannot get to Iraq for the Karbala procession, there are many similar marches around the world.

An estimated 35,000 people attended Sunday's Marble Arch procession, organized by Hussaini Islamic Trust UK. According to the trust, this was the largest-ever gathering in the 46 years the event has been run in the UK.

While the entire purpose of the march is to remember and commemorate Hussain's stand against injustice and oppression, Sunday's event saw significant support for Islamic Regime figures.

The Jerusalem Post reviewed hundreds of videos and photos from the event, finding at least dozens of posters and flags of former supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, as well as hundreds of Islamic regime flags.

One in particular stood out: a poster by the Islamic Human Rights Commission with the words "Choose the right side of history" superimposed on a photo of Khamenei.

The IHRC has been investigated by the UK's Charity Commission since 2017 for its alleged ties to the Iranian regime.

The watchdog issued an official warning to the IHRC in March 2023, after a statutory investigation into concerns of "misconduct and/or mismanagement." However, the case remains ongoing, and no enforcement or penalty against the IHRC has been published to date.

IHRC also organizes the extremist annual al-Quds Day (Jerusalem Day) event.

Also visible in the footage from Sunday was a man wearing a keffiyeh featuring the three supreme leaders of the Islamic regime: erstwhile supreme leader Ruhollah Khomeini, Ali Khamenei, and Supreme Leader Mojtaba Khamenei.

The brazen displays of pro-regime propaganda

during Sunday's Arbaeen march were particularly striking given the UK's recent introduction of the National Security (State Threats) Act 2026.

The new legislation, brought into law in July, gives the Home Secretary new powers to designate organizations involved in state-threat activity linked to a foreign power.

On July 17, 2026, it officially designated the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps. This made expressing support for the IRGC a criminal offence.

Given that the ayatollahs are the ultimate authority over the IRGC, displays of support for them could be seen as support for the organization.

The Jerusalem Post reached out to the Metropolitan Police to confirm whether any action was taken.

Shadow Secretary of State for Justice and MP Nick Timothy wrote on X/Twitter: "You might be forgiven for thinking this is Tehran. But no, it is London, where those who live among us openly celebrate the antisemitic and terrorist state of Iran."



OPEN DISPLAYS of support for the Islamic Regime in Iran were seen throughout Sunday's Arbaeen Procession in London, on Sunday. (Instagram/Screenshot)

Nearly half of Britons want fewer, or no Israeli migrants in UK, poll finds

• By MATHILDA HELLER

Almost half of Britons want to see fewer or no Israeli immigrants in the United Kingdom, a new YouGov poll titled "Britons have a more negative view of immigration in 2026 than in 2016" has revealed.

When asked, "What countries do Britons think we should allow more and fewer migrants to come

from?" 23% of respondents said there should be less immigration from Israel to the UK, and 24% said there should be none.

This meant a total of 47% wanted either a partial or total reduction in Israelis being allowed to live in Britain.

This represented an eight-point increase from 39% in 2016.

The YouGov poll also explored how the views of those who voted

either "Remain" or "Leave" in the Brexit referendum have changed since 2016 regarding migrant nationalities.

The overall finding was that Remain and Leave voters have generally changed their opinions in the same direction. There were not many cases in which, for example, Remain voters became more welcoming toward a nationality while Leave voters became less welcom-

ing toward that same nationality.

But there are some interesting exceptions.

Notably, Remain voters have become more negative toward migrants from the US and Israel, compared to virtually no change among Leave voters. The percentage of Remain voters who wanted fewer or no migrants from Israel increased from 27% in 2016 to 41% in 2026, while in both 2016

and 2026, 52% of Leave voters said there should be fewer or no migrants from Israel.

On the other hand, Leave voters have become substantially more welcoming toward Polish, French, German, and Japanese migrants.

Splitting by political party (determined by who the respondent voted for in the 2024 elections), the highest levels of negative views toward Israeli migrants were seen

among Reform UK and Green voters, at roughly 52-53%.

Labour and Conservative voters are around the mid-to-high 40s percentile, while Liberal Democrat voters are lowest, at around 41%.

Overall, Russia recorded the highest combined opposition to immigration at 58%, followed by Pakistan at 52%, Nigeria at 48%, Israel at 47%, Egypt and India at 44%, and Turkey at 43%.

LIKUD

Continued from Page 1

were also expected to receive reserved slots, pending the approval of the party's secretariat.

The changes to the party's primaries have led to fierce internal tensions, with some party members in favor and others strongly against.

A fierce critic of changing the system has been MK Tally Gotliv, viewed as a candidate who would receive broad support from registered party members.

Gotliv sharply criticized the Tuesday decision to reserve the slots for the three ministers, condemning the defense minister.

She called the decision to grant Katz a reserved slot "a disgraceful move that mocks Likud voters, who understand one thing more than all the veteran ministers: the need to fight the legal establishment that is persecuting the right-wing government and right-wing figures."

Gotliv later said she planned to petition the Likud's internal court for a further hearing over the decision to grant Katz the reserved slot.

Reportedly, Netanyahu has held several meetings with Katz, seeking to bridge disagreements over the primary system and secure internal support for changing the system.

There were also reports that Netanyahu threatened to leave Likud if the proposed changes were not advanced.

Those within the party who oppose changing the primaries have argued that it will cause those who would otherwise score highly in the primaries to fall further down the list.

Likud has, for years, prided itself on conducting primaries in which over 100,000 of its registered members are eligible to vote for the Knesset list. Netanyahu pushed to change the system in recent weeks ahead of the primaries, which were set for August 17.

Parties are not required to hold primaries in Israel, and only a few do so.

The Likud primaries are expected to be highly competitive. Likud currently has around 40 ministers and MKs serving in the government and Knesset, but recent polls project the party winning only about 25 seats, leaving many at risk of losing their places on the party's Knesset list.

The debate on how to hold the Likud primaries comes ahead of the general elections, which are set to take place on October 27.

The primaries determine Likud's Knesset slate, with the party chairman placed first. Registered members then vote for candidates on the national list, while members from geographic districts vote for candidates from their respective districts.

Candidates chosen on the national list are combined with district representatives and places that guarantee representation for groups, such as women, immigrants, young members, and minorities. The regulations also reserve certain positions for candidates chosen by the party chairman.

In the 2022 primaries, for example, the first group of positions after the party chairman was largely filled by nationally elected candidates, while district positions and guaranteed-representation slots were inserted farther down the slate. Netanyahu was also given several reserved positions.

The precise locations of those different categories are determined before each election through the party's temporary election regulations.

That is why the current fight has centered not only on whether primaries will take place, but on how much of the resulting slate the members will actually control.

The tensions surrounding the slots also come after

the Tel Aviv District Court on Monday rejected Likud MK Afif Abed's attempt to restore a narrowly approved change allowing current and former MKs, ministers, and deputy ministers to run in the party's district primaries, leaving the restrictions in place ahead of the August 17 vote.

Judge Yaakov Shaked nevertheless sided with Abed on a central issue in the dispute, ruling that Likud's top internal court had exceeded its authority when it found that allowing incumbent politicians to compete in district races violated the party's principle of equality.

NYC

Continued from Page 1

New Yorkers feel safer."

The predominant focus of the roundtable, from what both rabbis conveyed to the *Post*, was the rising antisemitism in NYC and the way in which the mayor's hostility toward Israel has contributed to it.

"The message that was sent by everybody, each in their own way, to the mayor was that while we may agree or disagree with the current actions of the Israeli government or the current war, that the mayor's harsh rhetoric around Israel and its government and the mayor's continual singling out and excessive focus on Israel – when there are so many other things going on in our city and beyond – was alienating to our constituents, makes Jewish New Yorkers feel that the mayor is not for them, and makes them feel unsafe," Rabbi S recalled.

"We reiterated that it is hard to feel a sense of partnership when it feels like Israel is being singled out for harsh rhetoric attacks and the mayor is doing nothing to distinguish between Israel and New York City's Jews," he added.

He said each rabbi tried to express this same point to the mayor "in the hopes of him taking that to heart" and upholding his pledge of being a mayor for all New Yorkers and helping them feel safe.

Leener told the *Post* that while there were "certainly moments of tension and passion," these were "expressed respectfully."

"No one was there trying to convince the mayor to change his views on Israel," he said. "Rather, people were trying to convey how isolated and vulnerable many Jewish New Yorkers feel and the extent to which some believe [Mamdani's] rhetoric and the singling out of Israel have contributed to that feeling."

Like Rabbi S, Leener said concerns were raised several times about Mamdani's perceived "double standard" when it comes to Israel, and that "Israel and the Jewish community's relationship to Israel are sometimes treated in ways that other communities and their connections to countries or homelands are not."

Outside of Mamdani's own contribution to rising antisemitism, both rabbis told the *Post* that there was broad consensus that Jew-hatred is making the city unsafe.

"There seemed to be broad agreement about the seriousness of the security concerns facing Jewish institutions and the need for the city government to respond to them," Leener said.

"There was also a shared desire for the administration to better understand what Jewish New Yorkers are experiencing right now. The vulnerability and anxiety within the community were very real themes throughout the conversation."

Despite past criticisms of Mamdani for choosing to associate with select sects of Judaism – especially left-wing, progressive, and anti-Zionist ones – both rabbis told the *Post* that "there was tremendous diversity around the table."

"I really do think it was a good representation of New York's Jewish community,"

Rabbi S said. "It's impossible to get all segments, but the major denominations were there, and there was representation from a fair amount, geographically, of New York City."

Leener concurred: "I thought there was a thoughtful range of voices in the room."

"Obviously, no small group of rabbis can fully represent the extraordinary diversity of New York's Jewish community," he continued. "But people came from different communities, institutions, and points of view, and I thought that contributed to a substantive conversation."

Leener said that part of the power of the meeting was its intimacy, as a smaller group created space for a more candid and meaningful exchange. He also said that, from his understanding, there are to be additional conversations in the future.

Both rabbis said they came away with the impression that the mayor was there to listen and was open to suggestions.

"He was respectful in his responses and frequently asked clarifying questions to better understand what people were saying," Leener said. "I felt that he was genuinely engaging with us, acting in good faith, and listening carefully to our concerns, particularly our plea to help turn down the temperature."

"I know some will view that as simply part of his political skill or personal charm, and I understand that skepticism. But my honest read of both him and the room was that the engagement felt genuine."

Rabbi S spoke similarly of Mamdani's approach: "The mayor listened, asked some clarifying questions, and expressed that he appreciated the good faith conversation and that he took our words to heart."

While Rabbi S said he truly does not know what to expect going forward, he nevertheless felt grateful to be in the room.

"I think there was really strong consensus about that, despite people's different views about Israel, and there was also a consensus that there's a desire to work with the mayor on other issues of concern like affordability, childcare, and healthcare. A number of people raised immigration, and the mayor acknowledged these as issues of common cause and concern," he said.

Leener told the *Post* he left feeling "cautiously hopeful."

"I appreciated that the administration invited us in, listened, and created space for a candid and substantive conversation. But ultimately, I will judge the mayor and his administration by their actions and by the results they deliver," he said.

For Leener, one concrete test will be whether the Jewish community sees meaningful progress around security, including making NYPD presence more accessible to synagogues, Jewish schools, and other Jewish institutions.

"I hope the conversation leads to greater understanding, a lowering of the temperature, and ultimately concrete action," he said.

"What stayed with me most was the value of being in actual conversation. Our political climate has made it increasingly difficult to speak openly with people with whom we profoundly disagree, as though simply sitting down, listening, or engaging somehow means abandoning our convictions. I believe the opposite is true," Leener continued.

"I remain a staunch supporter of Israel and have profound disagreements with the mayor that were not resolved by this meeting. But we can hold deeply to our beliefs while remaining in real conversation with one another. In fact, that is often how greater understanding becomes possible."

DEATH

Continued from Page 1

in the southern province of Daraa, where the first anti-Assad protests erupted in 2011.

Najib, a cousin of the Assads, was detained by Syrian security forces in early 2025 and is still the only accused to be tried in person.

Celebrations and some skepticism

In Daraa, crowds also gathered to celebrate, carrying pictures of people arrested or killed during the war, such as Hamza al-Khatib, a 13-year-old boy who activists said was arrested by Syrian security forces and then tortured and killed.

Noha al-Masri, a prosecutor present at Tuesday's sentencing, lost her own brother in a crackdown on a Daraa protest in 2011.

"The ruling that came, as we expected, was as big as the sacrifices that Syrians gave for 15 years, as big as the suffering of the families and relatives of the martyrs," Masri said.

The sentencing follows a nearly four-month trial process, billed by Syria's new Islamist-led authorities as a sign the country is prioritizing transitional justice to move away from Assad's rule.

However, some said the death sentence would diminish any chance of Assad and his fellow defendants being repatriated to face justice in their home country.

"There is a huge problem, which is that no one will hand over a criminal to a country that issues a death sentence. This will cut off the road to Assad, and many other criminals, being handed over to Syria," Anwar al-Bunni, head of the Syrian Center for Legal Studies and Research, said, adding, "This is performative justice, not transitional justice."

Ousted in lightning offensive

Assad, born in 1965, became president in 2000 after his father Hafez died.

He maintained the family's rule and the dominance of their Alawite sect in the Sunni Muslim-majority country, as well as Syria's status as an ally of Russia and Iran while hostile to Israel and the United States.

Shaped in its early years by the Iraq War and Syria's military presence in Lebanon, Assad's rule was defined by the war that spiraled out of the 2011 Arab Spring, when Syrians demanding democracy took to the streets and were met with deadly force by his security forces.

Branded an "animal" in 2018 by US President Donald Trump for using chemical weapons – an accusation he denied – Assad outlasted many of the foreign leaders who believed his demise was imminent in the early days of the conflict, when he lost swathes of Syria to rebels.

But in 2024, rebels led by Sharaa swept across Syria in a lightning offensive that lasted less than two weeks.

Assad already faces an arrest warrant in France over the bombing of a press center in Homs in 2012.

DISARM

Continued from Page 1

to take place in September. Israeli officials have made clear that the pilot program will not be expanded to additional areas unless the LAF fully demilitarizes the area.

Despite Israel's claims and frustration, Lebanese President Joseph Aoun said on Sunday that progress had been made in negotiations with Israel and that a diplomatic path was preferable to war.

"Since the framework agreement was signed, the scale of Israeli strikes has decreased, allowing Lebanese people to return and enjoy their country," Aoun said.

Aoun stressed that Lebanon would not relinquish a single inch of its territory, but added that the slogan "what is taken by force can only be returned by force" had proven incorrect in practice.

He also said it was time for residents of southern Lebanon to live in peace and that his goal was to rebuild the country.

DETENTION

Continued from Page 1

this has severely harmed Israeli legitimacy worldwide.

Immediately after October 7, and arguably until the defeat of the last of Hamas's 24 battalions in summer 2024 – or even until the ceasefire with Hamas in October 2025 – one could justify Israel taking a hit in the legitimacy department in order to ensure its fundamental future security needs versus Hamas.

However, since somewhere between summer 2024 and October 2025, Israel has been reevaluating various more extreme wartime practices.

For example, currently (though tactics can change at any moment), the IDF is in a ceasefire on all fronts and is not actively attacking any of its adversaries.

If the IDF and Israel can afford such a risk to try to advance some of its legitimacy and diplomatic long-term interests, might there be room to reduce the off-the-charts volume of administrative detentions of Palestinians?

The next challenge would be: Under what model could this be done?

This is where Dardik could come into the picture.

Israel's defense establishment suspects Dardik was involved in multiple violent and dangerous attacks on Palestinian villages, including in March.

Despite viewing Dardik as an ongoing and potential future danger – beyond even his past alleged dangerous conduct – a series of court decisions and debates within the Israeli defense establishment have led to more lenient terms for Dardik than his prison stints and even than previous administrative travel restraining orders.

For example, at one earlier point, Dardik was prohibited by an IDF administrative restraining order from traveling anywhere in the West Bank.

While he still cannot travel to most of the West Bank, it is now permitted for him to travel to and live in Modi'in Illit, which is in Judea and Samaria.

Essentially, with Dardik, a mix of the courts and the Israeli defense establishment decided that he was and remains dangerous but that if he does not go anywhere in the West Bank other than Modi'in Illit and if he checks in with the police of that town twice a day, the danger he presents can be counterbalanced or tolerated.

In addition, the IDF went further, suggesting that if Dardik was willing to wear electronic ankle cuffs that allow him to be tracked, it could even consider allowing him to travel in other parts of the West Bank.

In the past, a small number of extremist, violent Jews were sometimes put in administrative detention. But that has not happened since Defense Minister Israel Katz vetoed it in January 2025.

All that has been left – short of full criminal indictments – are administrative restraining orders related to traveling to the West Bank.

It would appear that the Israeli defense establishment thinks it can strike creative and lenient balancing acts short of house arrest, not just merely with Jews who are affiliated with an ideologically violent group, but even with Jews like Dardik, who are suspected of repeated actual violence.

If so, could this model be used for Palestinians who

are merely affiliated with terror groups, such as passing out recruiting fliers, but have not been part of a plot to perpetrate violence?

Until now, the answers about why Palestinians get treated more harshly, often regarding administrative detention and similar tools than Jews have been twofold.

First, ideologically speaking, more of the Palestinian detainees are looking to commit murders and more of the Jewish detainees are looking to commit vandalism or lower-grade violence.

Second, it was considered too dangerous to leave Palestinians under house arrest or under an administrative restraining order against certain travel in the West Bank because they do not live surrounded by Israeli police.

Further, if a Palestinian decided to disappear and his or her release from detention, it would be much harder to locate and rearrest them, requiring a large IDF incursion into Palestinian areas.

There was also an assumption that Jewish detainees were not all that dangerous, and so they could be released as long as they did not perpetrate witness tampering.

But now, possibly all of these differences have fallen away, paving a path toward more leniency for Palestinians instead of administrative detention, and toward winning back some of Israel's legitimacy globally – especially in the United States.

Dardik has been declared dangerous in both the past and the future, but officials deemed an administrative restraining order regarding travel or ankle cuffs sufficient to balance the danger.

Even more significant, the idea that invading Palestinian areas to rearrest a Palestinian detainee who broke the conditions of his release was a big deal comes from a pre-2022-2023 time period when such raids were rare.

Since 2022, and even more since October 7, nightly IDF raids into all parts of the West Bank have become standard. Leaving large IDF outposts in the center of Jenin, Tulkarm, Nur Shams, and other places has also become standard since January 2025.

So what exactly is so hard and unusual about another raid or two to rearrest such a Palestinian? Knowing how complete the IDF's control over Judea and Samaria is today, as opposed to a few years ago, could also deter an only mildly committed associate of a terror group from trying to flee and hide.

The Dardik model could be rolled out as a pilot program for a small number of Palestinian detainees and tracked for outcome before it is expanded all that much.

Besides starting to try to improve the already bad legitimacy situation, rolling out such a pilot program would save Israel from otherwise undermining its entire basis for administrative detention of Palestinians.

One of the critical bases and defenses has always been that detainees are usually held for periods of six months to two years.

But with a rising number of thousands of detainees (How can each one be an arch terrorist leader?) being held for longer than that, there is a point where Israel would be eroding its own defense of the administrative detention tool under international law.

None of this suggests Israel should be releasing hardened violent terrorists.

But it has been clear for some time that when Israel has over 3,000 Palestinians in administrative detention on top of twice as many other Palestinians in other detention situations, not all of the 3,000-plus detainees can be as bad as Israel has claimed the kind of person who gets administratively detained needs to be.

Palestinian terror is nowhere near disappear-

ing and must be fought in a variety of ways, likely still involving administrative detention at times.

Yet getting the volume of Palestinian administrative detainees under control is a time bomb for American and global support that Jerusalem likely needs to defuse so that Israel can save its global standing while there is still time.

TRUMP

Continued from Page 1

coalescing around Graham Nordone as its preferred successor, even though many voters knew relatively little about her and initially expected her to serve only as a caretaker.

Graham Nordone has sought to turn her lack of traditional political experience into an advantage.

"I'm not a politician. I'm not a millionaire. I understand the average struggles of the American family," she said during a debate earlier this month.

While she was close to her brother and previously campaigned on his behalf, Graham Nordone has also signaled that her tenure would not simply replicate his.

Graham became one of the Senate's most prominent voices on national security and foreign policy, as well as one of Israel's most outspoken supporters in Congress. His sister has said she intends to place greater emphasis on domestic issues, particularly affordability and the economic pressures facing American families.

She has also broken with her brother on the Senate's legislative filibuster, saying she supports eliminating it, while Lindsey Graham favored keeping it in place.

On one issue, however, Graham Nordone has left little room for ambiguity: her support for Trump.

"I completely support the president's agenda. I'm 100% behind him," she said.

She has also backed Trump's policies regarding the war with Iran.

The president's endorsement could prove particularly valuable in a compressed campaign in which Graham Nordone has had little time to establish an independent political identity among voters.

She faces two sitting Republican members of Congress from South Carolina, Reps. Ralph Norman and Russell Fry. Both are staunch conservatives who have emphasized their own support for Trump, despite running against the candidate he endorsed.

Also on the ballot is former South Carolina governor and congressman Mark Sanford, who is attempting a political comeback after a turbulent career in state and national politics.

Businessman Mark Lynch is running after previously having challenged Graham in the June Republican primary and receiving roughly 30% of the vote.

The crowded field could prevent the race from being decided on Tuesday night. If no candidate receives more than 50% of the vote, the top two finishers will advance to a runoff on August 25.

The eventual Republican nominee will face Democratic candidate Annie Andrews in November. Andrews, a pediatrician who previously ran for Congress in 2022, won the Democratic Senate primary in June.

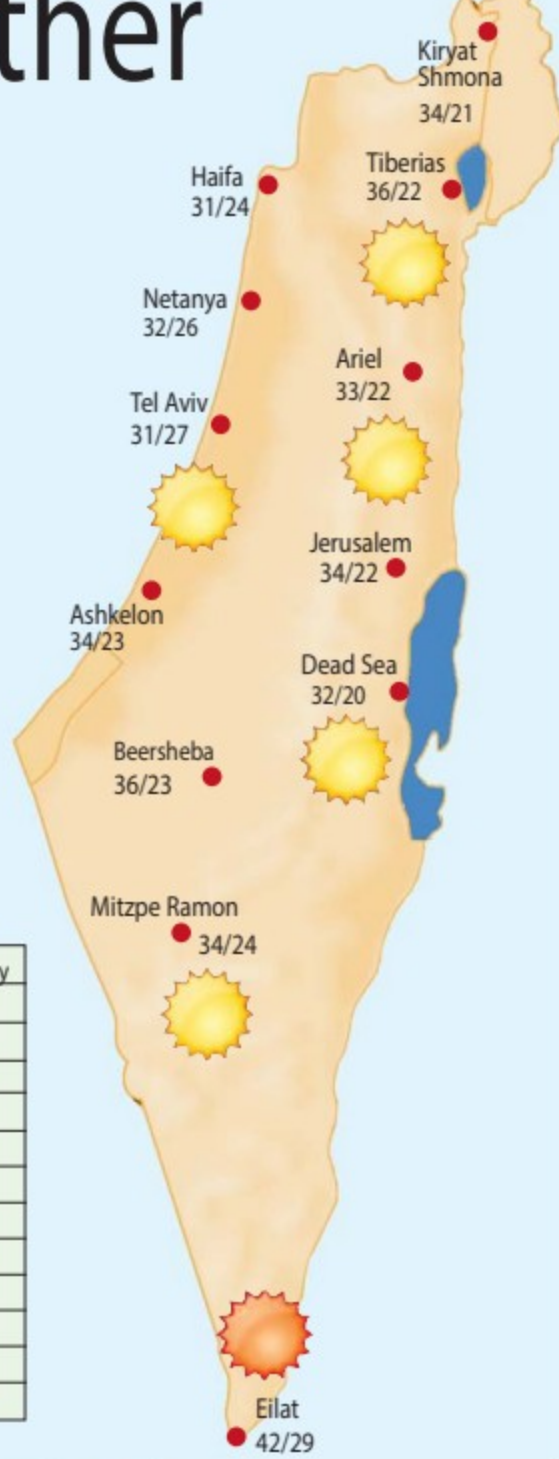
Democrats, however, face a steep challenge in a state where the Senate seat remains strongly Republican.

A month after the death of Graham, one of Washington's most recognizable senators, South Carolina voters are deciding more than who will carry the Republican banner in November. They are also deciding whether the Graham name – long synonymous with the state's representation in Washington – will remain attached to the seat for another generation.

• Sports Editor: URIEL STURM
Comments/Questions: sports@jpost.com

Weather

Today	Sunny
Thursday	Sunny
Friday	Sunny



	Thursday
Kiryat Shmona	34/22
Tiberias	36/23
Haifa	31/24
Netanya	32/27
Ariel	33/23
Tel Aviv	30/27
Jerusalem	34/22
Ashkelon	33/24
Dead Sea	32/19
Beersheba	36/23
Mitzpe Ramon	34/23
Eilat	42/30

North America Weather Today



Kremer tops former team as Twins beat O's

Jays win pitchers' duel, hand BoSox 3rd straight loss • Skubal winless since trade, but Dodgers prevail



• Field Level Media

Josh Bell went 2-for-5 with a homer and three RBIs, and the Minnesota Twins held on for a 9-5 win over the Baltimore Orioles on Monday night in Minneapolis.

Ryan Jeffers finished 2-for-4 with a double and three RBIs for Minnesota, which won the opener of a three-game series. Austin Martin finished 4-for-5 with a home run and a double.

Coby Mayo went 2-for-4 with a double and three RBIs to lead Baltimore at the plate.

Israeli right-hander Dean Kremer (2-4) beat his former team, which dealt him to the Twins before the trade deadline. Kremer limited the Orioles to one run on one hit in seven innings. He walked one and struck out seven.

The 30-year-old starter made the move to the Twins ahead of last week's MLB trade deadline, ending a six-year stint in Baltimore in which he posted a 42-44 record with a 4.37 ERA across 133 appearances, including 130 starts.

Orioles left-hander Trevor Rogers (7-8) allowed two runs on four hits in four innings. He walked two and fanned four.

The Twins opened the scoring in the third. Martin belted a leadoff shot over the wall in left-center field for his third homer.

Baltimore pulled even at 1-all on an unusual play in the fourth. Gunnar Henderson and Jackson Holliday attempted a double steal with Tyler O'Neill at the plate. O'Neill struck out and Twins catcher Jeffers threw to second, but Holliday avoided the tag for a long enough time that Henderson was able to score.

Kaelen Culpepper put the Twins on top 2-1 with a sacrifice fly in the fourth. Minnesota broke the game open with five runs in the seventh.

Mets 8, Braves 5

Brett Baty's first-inning grand slam set the pace and visiting New York held on to beat the Atlanta in the opener of a three-game series.



LOS ANGELES DODGERS star Shohei Ohtani beats a throw to Kansas City Royals catcher Salvador Perez to score during the Dodgers' 6-5 home victory. (Kirby Lee/Imagn Images)

The Mets ended Atlanta's nine-game home-field winning streak and improved their record against the Braves to 7-4. New York has won six out of seven on its nine-game road trip.

Francisco Lindor went 3-for-5 and added a home run to help the Mets' 12-hit attack. Jared Young had two hits and two RBIs. New York reliever Daniel Duarte (1-0) tossed two hitless innings, and Kodai Senga pitched a scoreless ninth to earn his first career save.

Bryce Elder (8-7) worked five innings and allowed seven runs on 10 hits, ending a string of 18 consecutive games in which Atlanta starters allowed three runs or fewer. Mauricio Dubon hit a two-run single.

Blue Jays 2, Red Sox 1

Charles McAdoo, recalled from Triple-A Buffalo before the game, hit a solo home run and Toronto held off visiting Boston.

Andres Gimenez added an RBI single for the Blue Jays, who have won three of their past four games. Simeon Woods Richardson (2-7), also promoted from Triple-A on Monday, allowed four hits and a run in three innings of relief. Toronto starter Jameson Taillon left after four scoreless innings due to right forearm discomfort.

The Red Sox, who had been the hottest team in the majors, have lost three in a row. Sonny Gray (14-3) gave up two runs and six hits in six innings.

Phillies 6, Cardinals 5

Edmundo Sosa had two hits and drove in three runs against his old team as Philadelphia prevailed at St. Louis.

Kyle Schwarber collected two hits and two walks and drove in a run for the Phillies. Andrew Painter (2-8) didn't allow a hit until the sixth, and he wound up permitting two runs on two hits in 5 1/3 innings. Jonathan Bowlan pitched a 1-2-3 ninth for his first career save.

Alec Burleson had two hits and three RBIs for the Cardinals, and Ivan Herrera added two hits and two runs. Hunter Dobbins (2-3) yielded three runs, one earned, in five innings.

Diamondbacks 9, Rockies 0

Nolan Arenado hit a first-inning grand slam and Zack Littell won his Arizona debut in a blanking of Colorado in Phoenix.

Littell (8-8) gave up two hits in 4 2/3 innings after replacing starter Michael Soroka. Arenado added a single and a stolen base and Gabriel Moreno and Ketel Marte had two hits and an RBI apiece for

the D-backs, who are eight games above .500 for the first time this season.

Troy Johnston had two hits for the Rockies, who were shut out for the sixth time this year and have lost 10 of 14. Gabriel Hughes (0-4) yielded seven runs on five hits in four innings.

Astros 6, Giants 3 (10)

Cam Smith tied the game with a two-out, two-strike single in the ninth inning. Isaac Paredes highlighted a three-run 10th with a two-run double and visiting Houston rallied to defeat San Francisco.

Astros starter Hayden Wesneski was charged with all three Giants runs on five hits in seven innings. Josh Hader (4-1), who worked a 1-2-3 bottom of the ninth to force extra innings, set the Giants down in order again in the 10th to pick up the win.

Jung Hoo Lee had two hits for the hosts, who have lost eight of their last 10, including two straight in extra innings. Seeking his first win of the season, Giants starter Blade Tidwell left with a 2-1 lead, having held the Astros to four hits in 5 2/3 innings.

Dodgers 6, Royals 5

Tarik Skubal went five innings in his home debut, Freddie Freeman delivered a go-ahead single in the seventh inning and host Los Angeles rallied for a victory against Kansas City.

Max Muncy had a three-run double while Freeman had three hits for the Dodgers, who had lost eight of their previous nine games. Freeman's one-out single scored Shohei Ohtani from second. Winless in two starts for the Dodgers, Skubal allowed three runs on four hits with two walks and six strikeouts.

Jac Caglianone homered and drove in three while Kyle Isbel added a home run for the Royals, who lost for their fourth time in five games.

Rangers 4, Angels 1 (10)

Brandon Nimmo drove in the go-ahead run with a bases-loaded single and Jake Burger added a two-run single in a three-run 10th inning, leading Texas past Los Angeles in Anaheim, Calif.

Elias Diaz went 2-for-5 with an RBI for the Rangers, who won for the fifth time in six games. Peyton Gray (6-0) tossed a 1-2-3 ninth, and Jacob Latz pitched a hitless 10th for his 23rd save.

Mike Trout hit a home run for the Angels, who lost their third straight game.

Reassessing power rankings after wild offseason moves



COMMENTARY
• By LORENZO REYES

This National Basketball Association offseason, as expected, was a tumultuous one.

A Top 5 player in Giannis Antetokounmpo was traded to the Miami Heat. Another All-NBA selection in Jaylen Brown also is on the move – and in his case to the Philadelphia 76ers, a division rival of the Boston Celtics, no less. And the game's greatest icon of this generation, LeBron James, is joining his fourth different team in what will be his record 24th NBA season. He'll join Brown in Philly.

And those were just some of the moves. With most of the major free agency moves completed and with the NBA draft well in the rearview mirror, here are our offseason power rankings:

- NBA offseason power rankings: Top 10
1. New York Knicks, 53-29 (regular-season record in 2025/26)
 2. San Antonio Spurs, 62-20
 3. Oklahoma City Thunder, 64-18
 4. Philadelphia 76ers, 45-37
 5. Detroit Pistons, 60-22
 6. Denver Nuggets, 54-28
 7. Minnesota Timberwolves, 49-33
 8. Houston Rockets, 52-30
 9. Cleveland Cavaliers, 52-30
 10. Los Angeles Lakers, 53-29

The defending-champion Knicks stayed mostly put though they did lose Mitchell Robinson, but it nonetheless remains that everyone is looking to catch them. The biggest movers here, however, are undoubtedly the Sixers, who overhauled their roster after those Knicks swept them in the conference semi-



SUPERSTARS ON the move: Giannis Antetokounmpo (left) to Miami and LeBron James (right) to Philadelphia headline a dramatic offseason of roster changes across the National Basketball Association. (Imagn Images)

nals; Jaylen Brown and LeBron James suddenly give the Sixers one of the most stacked starting lineups in the league. Now, can they stay healthy?

One interesting team in this group is the Timberwolves, who clearly understood that Anthony Edwards would need more help with shot creation and ball handling. Out are Julius Randle and Naz Reid and in comes LaMello Ball in what could be the biggest feast or famine move of the offseason. And then there's the Lakers, who lost James and went all-in on Walker Kessler. These moves are all about building around Luka Doncic and Austin Reaves, but the new pieces may need time to jell. Even then, it's not immediately clear if Los Angeles actually improved.

- NBA offseason power rankings: Nos. 11-20
11. Boston Celtics, 56-26
 12. Miami Heat, 43-39
 13. Toronto Raptors, 46-36
 14. Indiana Pacers, 19-63
 15. Atlanta Hawks, 46-36
 16. Portland Trail Blazers, 42-40
 17. Orlando Magic, 45-37
 18. Utah Jazz, 22-60
 19. Chicago Bulls, 31-51
 20. Phoenix Suns, 45-37

While the Heat did nab the best available player and a genuine Top 5 talent in the league in Giannis Antetokounmpo, this is still a roster that has some flaws; Miami should shine defensively but shooting and shot creation remain an issue. For the most part, people appear to be sleeping on the Pacers, who may have very well won the 2025 NBA Finals had star point guard Tyrese Haliburton not ruptured his Achilles tendon early in Game 7. Haliburton will be back and Ivica Zubac shores up Indiana's presence down low.

The Jazz are another interesting team and now we can see the fruits of their tank job. Adding Darryn Peterson with the No. 2 pick and last year's trade acquisition Jaren Jackson Jr. having an offseason to settle in makes Utah a top candidate to see the biggest win improvement next season. And the Bulls could also be quiet contenders, after adding No. 4 overall rookie Caleb Wilson and Norman Powell.

- NBA offseason power rankings: Nos. 21-30
21. Golden State Warriors, 37-45
 22. Charlotte Hornets, 44-38
 23. Dallas Mavericks, 26-56

24. Washington Wizards, 17-65
25. Los Angeles Clippers, 42-40
26. Memphis Grizzlies, 25-57
27. New Orleans Pelicans, 26-56
28. Milwaukee Bucks, 32-50
29. Sacramento Kings, 22-60
30. Brooklyn Nets, 20-62

The big question here is about the Warriors and their decision to run it back. Jimmy Butler appears likely to start the season sidelined, and Golden State essentially doubled down on this build. Rookie Yaxel Lendeborg should be a nice player, but this aging, injury-prone team may once again struggle to get out of the play-in. The Wizards are another team that appears to be on the ascent, but questions remain about Trae Young and Anthony Davis and how their veteran presence will fit with this young team that just landed No. 1 overall pick AJ Dybantsa.

Bronny faces pivotal Lakers season without LeBron

Bronny James comes into Year 3 of his NBA career with the specter of LeBron James' shadow looming. He will now be the lone James on the Los Angeles

Lakers roster and enters a pivotal season when development and usage will be lingering questions.

As LeBron heads east, joining the star-studded Philadelphia 76ers, Bronny will for the first time test the NBA landscape without his dad in the locker room. The decision to part ways with the Lakers ignited ongoing speculation that the father-son tandem might be a package deal. And, the possibility that LA might trade Bronny continued to be a talking point.

"They've drafted him in the second round two years ago. They developed him. They're a fan of him. He has a lot of people who like him within the building," noted reporter Khobi Price.

It's clear the Lakers are interested in keeping Bronny as a 3-and-D player on the roster. But how might he work his way into a crowded, new-look lineup?

The stats over his first two seasons certainly tell a tale of a player who has made slow but steady progress both in efficiency and usage.

James saw an increase in minutes and games played in his Year 2 campaign. But, he also spent time in the G-League, showing improvement in shooting efficiency there as well.

While his minutes played for the South Bay Lakers decreased from 34.2 to 26.7, he managed to show his growth offensively. Both his field goal and 3-point percentage went up from 44.3% to 56.4% and 38% to 45.6%, respectively. Though it should be noted that his volume decreased in that span, shooting roughly 10 times a game last season compared to the nearly 18 shots he was getting up in his rookie campaign.

James's development is certainly reason to be optimistic, but hardly assures minutes during the season. With the additions of Collin Sexton and Quentin Grimes and stars Luka Doncic and Austin Reaves in the backcourt, James will be hard-pressed to see action on the floor. (USA Today/TNS)

SPORTS SHORTS

Trump defends embattled FIFA's Infantino

United States President Donald Trump has weighed in on the controversy surrounding FIFA after the federation's president, Gianni Infantino, proposed a plan to sell a minority stake of the organization to private investors.

In the midst of the news, other governing bodies of soccer and world leaders have expressed distrust in Infantino and suggested his position should be on the line.

"FIFA would be making a terrible mistake if, for any reason, they even considered replacing President Gianni Infantino," Trump wrote on Truth Social on Monday. "He is fantastic, having just presided over the most successful World Cup, by four times, ever presented. If he is gone, it will never be as successful or profitable again!"

The United States was a co-host of this summer's World Cup with Mexico and Canada. It was the largest tournament yet, with a field of 48 teams playing 104 matches in 16 cities across three countries and breaking viewership and attendance records.

Infantino scrapped the proposal, called FIFA Forward Enterprise (FFE), after the plan received severe criticism from Concaaf and UEFA saying it would boycott all FIFA tournaments if the deal went through. Even after the plan was shelved, both organizations released statements continuing to express their distrust in the leader.

Several world leaders have said they lost trust in Infantino, including Canada Prime Minister Mark Carney and United Kingdom Prime Minister Andy Burnham.

"I don't have confidence in Mr. Infantino after this point given what transpired the nature of what transpired," Carney said.

The football federations of Mexico and Argentina have expressed their support of Infantino, who is up for reelection in March.

In December, Infantino presented Trump with the first FIFA Peace Prize. For the World Cup, Trump called Infantino and asked him to review USMNT player Folarin Balogun's red card. FIFA did rescind the penalty ahead of the Round of 16, but Infantino said Trump did not influence the decision. Trump and Infantino attended the final match together and the US leader handed the trophy to the winner, Spain.

• USA Today/TNS

Wyndham ends 20 years as PGA sponsor

Wyndham Hotels & Resorts will not return as a PGA Tour sponsor, Sports Business Journal reported on Monday, halting a 20-year run after its deal ran out this year.

Worth roughly \$5.4 billion, Wyndham had sponsored the Greensboro, NC, tournament since 2007, but per the report, is walking away instead of renewing its sponsorship with new terms. SBJ reported that Raymond James is likely to take over the Greensboro tournament, which will slide into the Tour's top-tier Championship Series in 2028. Raymond James also holds naming rights for the NFL's Tampa Bay Buccaneers' stadium through 2027.

The cost for a Championship Series sponsor is reportedly \$30 million or higher per year and increases annually. Lawmakers in North Carolina proposed \$40 million in state funding to help Greensboro secure a Championship Series, tied to a four-year agreement that would have the Tour holding Championship Series events from 2028-31 at Greensboro's Sedgfield Country Club.

Five other PGA Tour events – the Sompco Championship, The Sentry, the Travelers Championship, the Arnold Palmer Invitational and the Cadillac Championship – have secured spots for the 2028 Championship Series. Current Signature events, including the Trust Championship, RBC Heritage and Genesis Invitational, are expected to secure their spots for 2028. The 3M Open is among tournaments seeking one of the remaining spots.

• Field Level Media

COMMENT & FEATURES

THE JERUSALEM POST • WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 12, 2026

THE JERUSALEM POST

Founded in 1932 by GERSHON AGRON

ZVIKA KLEIN
Editor-in-Chief

ALEX WINSTON, News Editor ETHAN FREEDMAN, Night Editor

TAL SPUNGIN, Managing Editor

HERB KEINON and SETH J. FRANTZMAN, Senior Contributing Editors

ERICA SCHACHNE, Magazine Editor AARON REICH, Op-Ed Editor

AUDREY LYNN LEINOFF, Supervising Editor

MARC ISRAEL SELLEM, Chief Photographer ELAINE MOSHE, Archivist

Come home

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's first hand-picked addition to Likud's Knesset slate is Oren Dobronsky, an Israeli-born technology entrepreneur who has spent much of the past two decades in the United States. Dobronsky co-founded Hotbar, became a Silicon Valley investor, and built the California restaurant chain Oren's Hummus. His public professional profile lists Palo Alto as his location.

Likud announced this week that Dobronsky would be Netanyahu's first reserved candidate and said he would lead the party's work on artificial intelligence across the economy, education, medicine, and other fields. Walla subsequently reported that if Netanyahu forms the next government, he would offer him a ministerial portfolio dealing with AI.

Hours after the announcement, a recent social media post in which Dobronsky sharply attacked US President Donald Trump was circulated. Dobronsky apologized, saying he had lost his temper and regretted the post.

The naming also comes in the midst of a heated national argument over Israelis who live abroad and plan to return to vote in the election on October 27. The Fly&Vote initiative says tens of thousands of Israelis overseas have registered and hopes eventually to help bring as many as 70,000 to Israel for Election Day.

Dobronsky may have a great deal to contribute. Israel needs serious people in public life who understand technology, entrepreneurship, investment, and the global competition in artificial intelligence. His experience in the tech sector could prove invaluable in government.

Netanyahu's choice nevertheless raises a question that requires a prompt answer: Is Dobronsky coming home?

This should not be read as criticism of Israelis who spend periods of their life abroad. Israelis leave for work, study, family, professional opportunities, and many other legitimate reasons. Many remain deeply connected to the country, contribute to Israeli society from overseas, and eventually return. Israel benefits from those ties.

In many cases, time abroad allows Israelis to gain experience, expertise, and connections that ultimately benefit the country. We should encourage those Israelis to remain engaged with Israel and, when they choose, to bring that experience home.

The issue here is much narrower. What level of commitment and physical presence should Israelis expect from someone seeking to represent them in the Knesset and potentially serve as a cabinet minister?

Publicly available profiles have placed Dobronsky and his family in Palo Alto for years. Israelis living abroad retain a legitimate stake in the country and have made enormous contributions to it, especially since October 7. Serving in the Knesset carries a different level of responsibility. Members make decisions about war, taxation, education, health, military service, and countless other matters whose consequences are felt by the people here.

Israeli law makes the distinction relevant. An Israeli citizen who meets the legal requirements can run for the Knesset without a general residency requirement. Ministers, however, must also be residents. If Dobronsky is being prepared for an AI ministry, voters deserve to know where he intends to base his life, and when.

The question matters even more because Netanyahu is exercising considerable control over the Likud list. Likud members are preparing to vote in primaries while a number of reserved positions will bypass the party electorate.

Every reserved slot therefore carries a higher burden of explanation. Why this person? What public mission does the candidate bring? Has the candidate been properly vetted? What commitment is being made to voters?

The Trump episode adds to those questions. Dobronsky has every right to criticize an American president. Israeli public officials must be able to disagree with Washington when Israel's interests require it. His rapid apology immediately after entering politics does, however, raise questions about how carefully the party examined its first personal selection beforehand.

Israel should welcome talented Israelis who return from abroad to serve. Dobronsky could bring valuable experience from Silicon Valley into Israeli public life.

If that is what he intends to do, he should say so clearly and without hesitation.

A Knesset seat is a public trust. Likud voters, and the country as a whole, deserve to know that those asking to exercise that trust intend to live among the people they wish to serve.

INBAR ASHKENAZI, CEO Jerusalem Post Group

DROR RONEN, Director of Circulation
GALIT SASSON, Deputy CEO Commercial and Strategic Partnerships

EDITORIAL OFFICES AND ADMINISTRATION

The Jerusalem Post Building, PO Box 81, Jerusalem 9100002.
Telephone 02-531-5666, Fax 02-537-6553.

• CUSTOMER SERVICE *2421, 03-761-9056, 1800-574574,
Fax 03-561-3699.

PO Box 9344, Tel Aviv 6109202

• ADVERTISING 15 Ha'achim Mislavita, Tel Aviv 6701027.
Telephone 03-761-9000, Fax 03-561-0777.

• SUBSCRIPTIONS E-MAIL SUBS@JPOST.COM

• ADVERTISING E-MAIL TRAFFIC@JPOST.COM

• READERS LETTERS LETTERS@JPOST.COM

• OP-ED SUBMISSIONS OPEB@JPOST.COM

• COMMERCIAL GALITS@JPOST.COM

Published daily except Saturday, in Jerusalem, Israel by The Jerusalem Post Ltd. Registered at the GPO. © All rights reserved to The Jerusalem Post Group Ltd. Do not copy, distribute, replicate, photograph, translate, store on a database, transmit in any way (writing, printing or other media) or by any electronic means, optical, mechanical or otherwise, any part of this newspaper (including: text, drawings, photographs, pictures, maps and graphics) in textual form or on designed pages, including voice recording and typing, without the express permission, in writing, from the publisher The Jerusalem Post Group Ltd.



TURKISH PRESIDENT Recep Tayyip Erdogan (left) shakes hands with Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, next to Pakistan's Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, after signing a joint defense agreement in Mecca last week. (Saudi Press Agency/Handout via Reuters)

The scent of Saudi anxiety

• By ELI AVIDAR

The headlines announcing a new defense agreement between Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, and Turkey were presented as evidence of a changing strategic order in the Middle East. Saudi commentators quickly framed the agreement as proof that Israel would no longer be able to act freely across the region.

But once the interviews end and the official talking points are set aside, a different conclusion emerges. One can almost smell it: the scent of Saudi anxiety.

Not anxiety about Israel. Riyadh understands that Israel poses no direct threat to the kingdom. In reality, Saudi Arabia occupies only a limited place in Israel's strategic priorities. It attracts significant attention mainly when diplomatic engagement serves an immediate political purpose, such as before Israeli elections or during negotiations over regional normalization.

Saudi Arabia's real concern is Iran.

That is what makes this agreement so revealing. Rather than projecting confidence, it reflects the kingdom's search for additional security guarantees in the face of Iran's growing regional influence.

The choice of partners is also telling. Pakistan and Turkey both maintain important relationships with Tehran. Neither is a natural cornerstone of an anti-Iran coalition. If anything, the agreement illustrates Riyadh's desire to broaden its options in an increasingly uncertain regional environment.

Economics also plays an important role. Pakistan continues to struggle with severe financial challenges, while Turkey has faced years of inflation and economic instability. For both governments, closer ties with Saudi Arabia offer more than strategic cooperation. They create opportunities for investment, financial assistance, and deeper economic engagement.

Saudi Arabia's partners may also be

expecting significant economic benefits from this new relationship. Pakistan and Turkey, both facing persistent economic pressures, are likely hoping that closer strategic ties will translate into greater Saudi investment and financial support. Those expectations, however, may prove unrealistic. Saudi Arabia is confronting economic constraints of its own.

Several of its flagship mega-projects have slowed dramatically, reflecting the growing gap between the kingdom's ambitious vision and the financial realities it now faces. Riyadh may have the desire to project influence, but its ability to finance the ambitions of others is no longer unlimited.

This agreement is better understood as an expression of Saudi anxiety and of Pakistani and Turkish hopes for greater Saudi economic support. For Riyadh, it reflects the search for additional security in the face of regional uncertainty. For Islamabad and Ankara, it carries the prospect of deeper financial and investment ties with the kingdom.

Regional rivalries also shape this alignment. Saudi Arabia's competition with Abu Dhabi provides another incentive to pursue an independent strategic course, while President Recep Tayyip Erdogan continues to position Turkey as a leading power in the Middle East, often using confrontations with Israel to reinforce that ambition.

Taken together, this is less an agreement born of confidence than one driven by insecurity. At its core, it is an agreement rooted in fear. Saudi Arabia is not acting from a position of complete confidence. It is hedging against uncertainty. That is a rational policy, but it should not be mistaken for a demonstration of regional dominance.

The headlines speak of power. The agreement itself suggests something different: a kingdom seeking reassurance in a volatile neighborhood.

The writer is a former Israeli minister and the author of *The Abyss: Bridging the Divide Between Israel and the Arab World*.

The Gaza bait and switch



• By PESACH WOLICKI

Israel has rejected US President Donald Trump's 15-point Gaza plan, Prime Minister Netanyahu had told his cabinet on Sunday. He wasn't vague about why. "The IDF," he said, "will not carry out any withdrawal until Hamas is disarmed."

That sentence exposes exactly what was wrong with Trump's road map all along. The bait and switch of the suggested 15-point road map for the second phase of Trump's Gaza peace plan lies in the fact that it does not explicitly reject the 20-point plan Israel signed onto last fall.

Rather, its deception lies in the plan walking back key points while sounding as if it is implementing them.

The most noteworthy change is in the sequencing. The road map takes commitments that were sequential – Hamas had to do X before Israel would do Y – and turns them into parallel or reverse processes.

Given that nothing is crossed out, it still looks like implementation. But in an agreement like this, the order in which the process is executed is part of the agreement. Reverse the order, and you have reversed the deal, even while every clause appears intact. Netanyahu's rejection is, in effect, a rejection of that reversal.

Start with the disarmament and removal of Hamas – the whole point of this process. Point 13 of the original plan was unambiguous: Hamas's infrastructure would be "destroyed and not rebuilt" with weapons "permanently beyond use."

Article 8 of the road map uses different language – weapons are to be "decommissioned and stored" only after the incoming National Committee for the Administration of Gaza (NCAG) has taken charge and the International Stabilization Force (ISF) is deployed.

"Destroyed" became "stored," and the new governing body now precedes Hamas's disarmament rather than following it. Article 9 goes a step further, subjecting "personal weapons" belong-



ARMED HAMAS terrorists display a home-made rocket during a military parade in Gaza City in 2014. (Suhailb Salem/Reuters)

ing to Gazan citizens to Palestinian law under the NCAG. Personal weapons? Palestinian law?

The ISF's role may be the single most consequential change. Originally, it was "the long-term internal security solution," working alongside Israel. But Article 12 of the road map redefines its job as separating Israeli forces from NCAG-controlled areas and explicitly bars it from any policing role.

Internal security, however, now falls entirely to a Palestinian police force; Israel has no role in vetting this force.

The ISF hasn't been diminished – it has been redefined. What was originally meant to be a security partner now serves as a buffer standing between Israel and the Gaza population centers instead.

This raises a question that the road map never answers: If the ISF isn't the internal security solution, who actually takes Hamas's weapons away?

What's emerging instead is a Palestinian Authority security force under a new acronym. A former PA bureaucrat leads the NCAG, which is shaping up to be "PA 2.0." Notably, the original plan demanded comprehensive reform by the PA before it would play any role in Gaza.

LET'S BE clear about what this adds up

to. While Trump's original 20-point plan aspired to a Gaza free of Hamas, this road map eventuates in its preservation.

Consider Article 10: "Weapons of the militias shall be decommissioned and stored under NCAG authority ... Members of those militias shall not be integrated into the security and police services."

The militias in question are the courageous anti-Hamas groups that have formed in Gaza – some working with the IDF, fighting to free Gaza from Hamas, and seeking peaceful coexistence with Israel. The road map categorically excludes them from the future police force.

This begs the question: If the goal is a post-Hamas Gaza, and police officers are to be vetted, what vetting standard would these anti-Hamas militias fail? These militias are the closest thing Gaza has to a homegrown constituency for coexistence, and they are the one group locked out of building what replaces Hamas.

The issue of Palestinian statehood follows the same pattern. In the 20-point plan, it appears only at the end, as a distant aspiration contingent on real PA reform and progress toward transforming Gaza's society.

In the road map, a Palestinian state

is introduced in Article 1 as a core aim, and it reappears in Article 8, tied to the weapons process – but with no mention of PA reform at all.

Netanyahu addressed this too on Sunday, saying that "as long as I am prime minister, there will be no Palestinian state." That is the correct answer to a document that tried to smuggle statehood in through the front door while dropping the one safeguard – PA reform – that made the idea conditional in the first place.

And the body meant to enforce all of this, the International Verification Committee, includes Qatar and Turkey among its guarantors – two governments with long records of financing and hosting Hamas's leadership. They have now been positioned to judge whether Hamas is keeping its word.

Nickolay Mladenov, the head of the Board of Peace, said the quiet part out loud when he wrote that Israeli withdrawal "must move in lock step with decommissioning" weapons. That phrase captures precisely the sequencing shift Netanyahu just refused to accept.

This is not a new story. It is the oldest story in Israel's diplomatic history. From the 1979 Egypt-Israel peace treaty to the Oslo Accords of the 1990s, nearly every agreement Israel has signed has followed the same arc: the other side ignores its written obligations, and Israel is expected to accept less than was promised.

For example, the Oslo Accords required the PA to educate its population toward peaceful coexistence. That clause was abandoned without consequence, and two generations of Palestinians were raised on a curriculum that teaches murdering Israelis is the highest act of patriotism.

This road map is repeating that pattern in real time, clause by clause. Netanyahu's rejection is the first sign that, in a post-October 7 world, Israel may finally be prepared to insist that all agreements be implemented exactly as written. Netanyahu must hold his ground and declare that the decades of bait-and-switch games are over.

The writer is the executive director of *Israel365 Action* and co-host of *the Shoulder to Shoulder podcast*.

Kibbutz Nirim rebounded from Oct. 7, but still lives it



CENTER FIELD
• By GIL TROY

Last week, I attended a vivid, moving photography exhibition, celebrating kibbutz and day-to-day Israeli life. I shouldn't write about it because I'm not an objective observer, given that the photographer was my talented cousin, Adele Raemer.

But what made it exceptional, newsworthy, and inspiring yet heartbreaking was that her photographs capture life in Nirim, a Gaza border kibbutz, since 2020, meaning before it was invaded on October 7, and since.

Baseball fans love split-screen television. You watch the pitcher prepare to pitch, as the first-base runner prepares to bolt.

What a metaphor for life in Israel.

It's the "great Israel disconnect."

What's true?

I wonder "what's real in my amazing, enjoyable, reassuring, soul-expanding, day-to-day life?"

Is it that life is full of wonderful, grounded, all-too-often heroic, self-sacrificing children, many weddings and births, fun coffee dates, scenic jogs around Jerusalem, and special relatives and friends?

Or, as many others fear, is "the real Israel" its toxic politics, the terrifying headlines, the threats from so many evil enemies?

The challenges are mind-boggling. And they're exacerbated, I regret to say, by some American Jewish friends minimizing the threats, joining the pile-on demonizing of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, while trying to bond with supposed allies who increasingly threaten them – and us.

Still, I live in the moment, and what a moment it was

last Thursday. My cousin, Adele, a Bronx native who moved to the Negev decades ago, has long had a remarkable artistic flair.

In 2016, she joined the online network 52Frames to grow as a photographer. Since then, by 7 a.m. every Monday (midnight East Coast US time), she posts a photograph in response to the weekly challenge. It could be a self-portrait, a landscape, a group shot, or a photograph taken with a certain technique. She's become Nirim's unofficial photographer-in-chief, recording the community's life, moment by moment.

So yes. After all these years, she deserved to be honored by her community for her eye, her composition, her technique. One woman thanked her for capturing so many of her family's special moments as her kids grew.

The photographs were displayed in the old etching studio of the late Dov Heller, a Romanian-born artist who arrived at the nine-year-old Kibbutz Nirim in 1955.

His daughter, Galia Heller Kremer, offered Adele a converted dairy barn, which is now the community's art gallery, and greeted the guests warmly. "We could have called it *From New York to Nirim*, but ultimately, Adele is from here. She's one of us," Kremer said.

It was more appropriate to call the exhibit *Seeing Home*, especially, she sighed, "after all we've been through." Enough said.

To those who will never come home

The exhibit was dedicated "to all our friends who never got the opportunity to see home again, after October 7," and especially commemorated Adele's dear friend



A PHOTOGRAPH from the 'Seeing Home' exhibit at Kibbutz Nirim. (Adele Raemer)

Judih Weinstein Haggai.

Weinstein Haggai was murdered by Hamas while walking in Kibbutz Nir Oz's fields with her husband, Gadi Haggai, early on October 7.

The snacks at the exhibit were vegan, honoring her passion. Recalling Weinstein Haggai's warmth, patience, love, and goodness, Kremer observed, "She died so far from everything she lived."

The split-screen nature of Nirim's post-October 7 life hung over the delightful photos of kids in mid-jump at the pool, dads dressed in silly ways at a community Shavuot ceremony, and stunning landscapes of the surrounding fields.

Adele, who survived for 11 hours in her safe room, said that in the unnerving weeks following the massacre,

"from week to week I didn't know where I was going to sleep, but I knew that every Monday I would send in my photography assignment." The power of ritual, of regularity, in defying catastrophe was quintessentially Israeli.

Beyond feeling how, for these survivors, the pall of October 7 infects everything, the juxtaposition of Nirim's renaissance, with Weinstein Haggai's beloved Nir Oz just 2.5 kilometers away, suspended in October 7, was sobering.

On the day of the massacre, Nirim lost five civilians and had five members kidnapped. Those devastating losses pale compared to the 47 souls Hamas murdered in Nir Oz, while kidnapping 76 people – 67 of whom were alive. Fifty-four eventually

were freed.

What it costs to survive

Rehabilitating Nirim cost approximately 43 million shekels. Since last summer, it's fully restored and functional – physically at least.

Most residents returned. It will cost over 10 times more to rebuild Nir Oz – and will take years. "Hamas didn't just set out to murder us, kidnap us, abuse us," Adele explained, "they wanted to destroy our communities, the societies we've built."

Of more than 30 individual civilian communities assaulted that day, Hamas hit 22 kibbutzim. Intelligence documents and the terrorists' boasts revealed that these terrorists delighted in ravaging the kibbutzim – all of which are within Israel's original borders, the

so-called Green Line.

But to Hamas and their enablers worldwide, every inch of Israel is "occupied territory." Every Israeli is a "settler." Even the most secular, left-wing, Peace Now kibbutz is an illegitimate "settlement," reflecting the kind of Zionist success Hamas cannot tolerate and seeks to annihilate.

Apparently, it is quite easy for the world to forget that Hamas and other Gazans planned, intentional, unspeakable horrors. Yet the people of the Gaza border communities can't forget – even the "lucky ones" back living their seemingly-normal lives.

Few Israelis forget either. That's why we need our friends worldwide to understand how deep the trauma runs and how much we have

learned about our many enemies' non-negotiable evil.

Our friends should also take pride in Israel's Zionist resilience. It's remarkable that so many of those who were overrun on October 7 have returned, as Nirim's members have, or are still vowing to return home.

Professor Gil Troy is a Distinguished Scholar of North American History at McGill University and a Senior Research Fellow at the JPPI, the Jewish People Policy Institute.

He is the author of nine books on presidential history and nine on Zionism, including Theodor Herzl: Zionist Writings from the Library of the Jewish People, as well as his latest e-book, The Essential Guide to the US-Israel Partnership: the 250th Anniversary Edition.

Hiking should not be a crime punishable by death



• By YISRAEL MEDAD

If you are opposed to the enterprise of the resettling of Jews in the West Bank, ambivalent on the matter, or even an uninterested news consumer, the version of events of Friday, July 24, that you probably have absorbed since then has gone through a process of extreme distillation and ideological refinement.

One news site informed its readers that "Israeli settlers entered a Palestinian village." Then, it added, residents of an outpost community "came out to repel the settlers." After that, according to the same news source, one of the Arab villagers "snatched a settler's weapon and opened fire."

The background framing included additional information to wit: "Armed settlers had trespassed, [which is] consistent with the common strategy of 'initiating friction.'"

Blame has been apportioned; Jewish guilt has been declared.

At 1:40 p.m. on the day of the incident, only five hours or so after the shootings, Ksenia Svetlova posted on X/Twitter.

A decade ago, Svetlova was a member of the Knesset for the Zionist Union (an alliance of the Labor Party and Tzipi Livni's Hatnua). Currently, she is an asso-

ciate fellow at Chatham House in London, where former prime minister Ehud Barak memorably declared on March 27, 2023, that some members of Israel's government were "lunatic racists on the extreme Right."

In her tweet, Svetlova reversed the narrative, as if it were Arabs who had illegally entered a Jewish settlement.

She then returned to relative reality, highlighting the narrative of "settler violence." According to Svetlova, the hike in which Israeli settlers entered a Palestinian region was in Area A (yet the road they were walking on was actually in Area B), and they entered the village (but in actuality, the Arabs came out).

Despite the video evidence she posted, Svetlova, as did others, ignored the fact that the hikers, as well as the IDF soldiers who arrived, and Capt. (res.) Benayahu Mellet, who was ordered to join in, all fired numerous shots in the air for over a minute, intentionally trying not to harm any of the Arabs.

Another, Dror Etkes of Kerem Navot, which is an anti-occupation NGO that "monitors and researches Israeli land policy in the West Bank," also posted about the incident on Twitter.

He had a narrative that claimed the incident was in fact over, except that the "settlers" then arrived. Etkes's perspective can be demonstrated by a later X post, from July 28, in which he called the head

of the IDF Central Command "settler IDF apartheid General [Avi] Bluth."

The military's investigation into the incident was published on August 5. It was not withheld from the public, just as an investigation into another sensitive incident that occurred in November 2024, when two soldiers were killed in southern Lebanon while investigating a historical site, was published. The IDF found that Mellet acted with "extreme heroism" and defined the Arabs involved as "terrorists."

The participants insisted they were not properly in the village. True, the report found that security authorities had not approved the outing, but the Shomron Brigade did receive preliminary but very unclear information about it several hours beforehand, and that the Arab residents were those who initiated contact, confronting the hikers.

I WILL not second-guess the act of unstrapping one's rifle from one's body, which seemingly led to the weapon being snatched, or even if it was wise to get so close to the rioters, even pushing and shoving them. Other points need to be addressed, nevertheless.

Walking through the Land of Israel should not be considered a crime, nor a provocation, and certainly not an act that permits local Arabs to throw stones at the hikers or to seek to do them violent injury. I myself experienced a similar situation

back in 1989, in the pre-Oslo Accords period. We were nowhere near a village but rather deep in a wadi, which provided an advantage to the stone throwers. Our presence was enough to have them initiate violence. We were not in a grove of olive trees, in a field of barley, or trudging through someone's backyard. We were Jews.

We were doing nothing more than what president Yitzhak Ben-Zvi and his wife, Rachel Yanait, had done before World War I – we were walking throughout the country.

Hikes were also part of the early Yishuv school system, and Israeli writer, lecturer, and geographer Zev Vilnay made a living leading them.

Further, the Palmach marched across Samaria and through the Judean Desert and made sure to visit Hebron in the early 1940s, at a time when the British banned entry to non-residents.

Exploring the land was, and continues to be, a natural Jewish act, in the spirit of: "Arise, walk through the land, the length of it and the breadth of it" (Genesis 13:17).

Yes, some Jewish residents beyond the Green Line are or can be violent. However, the "settler violence" campaign is a travesty of the facts and the context.

Worse, it is intended to cover up the numerous acts of Arab violence and terror, and the seriousness of the damage done and intended. Friday's hike participants

were not a bunch of vigilante hooligans.

A third lesson from the incident is that objective news seems not to be of any interest anymore.

Yasmin Levy of *Haaretz*, for instance, was quite convinced, as her July 26 TV review column suggested, that "in the name of Jewish supremacy," Israeli TV distorted this latest West Bank violence.

If you clicked on Arutz Sheva or the *Strugim* website, however, you would see a very different picture.

Israeli politicians and public figures have the right to criticize and oppose policies. What we are witnessing, though, is a campaign, still on the fringes, of justifying Arab "resistance" to "colonialist occupation" while downgrading Arab terror.

From the Democrats Party chair Yair Golan's words that "Israel is a state that kills children for a hobby," radical elements are now mourning a sheikh who grabbed a gun from a Jew who was using it to shove him away to then murder that Jew and shoot at a soldier. Even members of Golan's party protested his description of the attack on the hikers as a "terror act."

Hiking is a non-threatening endeavor and should not be thought of otherwise. It should not be considered a crime punishable by death.

The writer is a researcher, analyst, and commentator on political, cultural, and media issues.

LETTERS

Without illusions or delusions

Daniel Goldman ("Beyond coalition arithmetic," August 10, 2026) misrepresents the principle of *Taqiyya* as a 'tactical disguise' of Islamic intentions, whatever that means. Rather it is a strategic manipulation which allows (or actually commands) Muslims to lie/deceive for religious, political, military or general purposes. His example (trying to discredit the *taqiyya* theory) that Mansour Abbas has recognized Israel as a Jewish state was simply a defac to declaration, similar to acknowledging that the sky is blue, and not a political endorsement (in Abbas's own words). He promised to help rebuild an arson-degraded synagogue in Lod. Five years later, I wonder how many Muslim Brotherhood funds have

been donated for its rehabilitation. Goldman is correct – we should respond without illusions, but not with the delusions of the Left.
MORRIS KARLIN
Jerusalem

No justification

It was very disturbing to read "W. Bank nationalist crime jumps by 63% – report" (August 11, 2026). Especially concerning is that, at a time when the IDF reportedly lacks more than 10,000 soldiers, 26 Israeli battalions are stationed in the West Bank. This raises an important question: Could some of these troops be better deployed to address Israel's other pressing security needs?

Equally important is the moral issue. The words of Rabbi Kenneth Brander of Ohr Torah Stone deserve to be heeded: "This violence committed by Jewish extremists is deeply disturbing and demands a clear moral response from Jewish and Israeli leadership. There is no justification, religious or otherwise, for attacking innocent people because of their identity."

Such violence not only harms innocent Palestinians; it also damages Israel's security, international standing, and democratic values.

Jewish and Israeli leaders should make clear that there can be no religious, political or security justification for such attacks.

RICHARD H. SCHWARTZ, PHD
Shores

A gesture of repentance

Having criticized Israel's current leadership many times I found Shmuel Legesse's article "Israel must prepare its Joshua generation for the post-Netanyahu era" (August 9, 2026) very enlightening.

For Israelis and the Jewish Diaspora to have a happy future, free from persecution, the sentiments of the writer provide a sustainable strategy.

However, the new Joshua generation will not arrive overnight. The damage done by Israel will remain in the memory of many for a long time.

May I suggest that a gesture of repentance would be an early sign of a change of a government's heart.

DAVID POWELL
Ponhir, Wales, UK

Eisenkot: A reassuring man, a troubling doctrine

• By EITAN CHIKLI

As Israel approaches the October 27 elections, Gadi Eisenkot possesses an advantage few rivals can match: he is reassuring.

A former IDF chief of staff, sober in manner and largely averse to political theatrics, he projects a decency that naturally inspires trust. Added to this is a family tragedy that deeply touched Israelis: his son Gal was killed in Gaza in December 2023, his nephew Maor Cohen Eisenkot the following day, and another nephew, Yogev Pazy, in November 2024.

Such loss, combined with a lifetime of service, commands respect. But an election is not a contest of personal virtues. Israel will be choosing a prime minister. It is therefore necessary to look beyond the reassuring man and examine the doctrine he represents.

Several episodes suggest a recurring tendency in Eisenkot's thinking: managing and containing threats rather than fundamentally altering the balance of power.

During his tenure as chief of staff, the Gideon Plan reduced personnel and reservists while favoring a smaller, more technological military. Maj.-Gen. Itzhak Brik issued grave warnings about logistics, stockpiles, maintenance and the ground forces' capacity to sustain prolonged war. Eisenkot disputed his assessment.

After October 7, the question is unavoidable: did this doctrine contribute to leaving Israel with an army too dependent on intelligence, technology and air power?

The same question arises from Eisenkot's approach to the Palestinians. In 2016, he defended the employment of some 120,000 Palestinians in Israel, arguing that their economic dependence con-



GADI EISENKOT speaks during the launch of his Yashar Party's election campaign in Hod Hasharon earlier this year. (Chaim Goldberg/Flash90)

stituted a moderating factor. In July 2026, he again contemplated eventually allowing 100,000-150,000 Palestinian workers into Israel.

This reflects more than an employment policy. It expresses a strategic assumption: that economic prosperity can moderate nationalist, religious or Islamist radicalism. A similar assumption

underlay aspects of Israel's pre-October 7 policy toward Gaza. Its validity deserves serious reconsideration.

Eisenkot's caution also appeared during the Gaza war. In January 2024, he called it an "illusion" to believe the hostages could be brought home quickly primarily through military pressure. Yet subsequent

Israeli operations demonstrated possibilities that earlier appeared unthinkable: Mohammed Deif, Hassan Nasrallah, and Yahya Sinwar were eliminated, Hezbollah was severely weakened and Israel struck military targets directly inside Iran.

Prudence is unquestionably a virtue in a military commander. But it can

become a weakness when it leads a leader to regard as impossible what boldness and sustained pressure may ultimately make possible.

Eisenkot's political positioning deserves equal scrutiny. He participated in the protests against the judicial reform and marched alongside Brothers in Arms, calling its members "patriots

who love the country." He refused to characterize decisions by volunteer reservists to stop serving as refusal, emphasizing their legal right to terminate voluntary service.

Yet when indispensable military personnel condition their service on the policies of a democratically elected government, mili-

tary readiness risks becoming an instrument of political pressure. A former chief of staff should have drawn that boundary more clearly.

Today Eisenkot seeks cooperation with Bennett, Lapid, and Liberman, but also with Yair Golan, and does not regard Mansour Abbas's Ra'am as an inherently unacceptable political partner. These choices are entirely legitimate. But center-right voters attracted by Eisenkot's reassuring image should understand the political direction his candidacy may ultimately produce.

This is the central ambiguity surrounding Gadi Eisenkot.

The man inspires respect, confidence, and sympathy. But a prime minister must be judged not by affability or personal biography, but by discernment, strategic vision, authority, and the ability to make difficult decisions.

On these fronts, serious questions remain. Eisenkot's security doctrine has often emphasized managing threats rather than decisively transforming them. His political positioning places him closer to the Kaplan protest camp and the Israeli left than his centrist image might suggest. Several of his strategic assessments have proved questionable.

The problem with Eisenkot, therefore, is not that he is a frightening man. It is almost the opposite: he is reassuring enough that voters may fail to examine what his ideas, alliances and weaknesses could mean once he is in power.

The author is an Israeli educator who holds an MPA from Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government. He is the former director of the TALI Education Fund and former rector of Universidad Hebraica in Mexico.

Restoring an old axis

• By SILABAT MANAYE

Over the past few months, a decisive shift has taken hold in the Horn of Africa's geopolitics. Emerging from a period of diplomatic friction, the bilateral relationship between Ethiopia and the United States is undergoing a profound structural recalibration. Both capitals are pivoting away from reactive crisis management toward a mature, forward-looking strategic alliance.

Yet to view this momentum strictly as a modern arrangement is to overlook its deep historical roots. The partnership between Washington and Addis Ababa is not a recent construct; it is an enduring strategic axis rooted in more than a century of mutual respect, trade, and regional defense collaboration.

Over a century of shared history

Diplomatic relations between the two nations officially began in December 1903, when American envoy Robert Peet Skinner met Ethiopian Emperor Menelik II in Addis Ababa to sign a landmark treaty of amity and commerce.

As Skinner later recounted in his memoir, *Abyssinia of Today*, the US sought an alliance with an uncolonized, sovereign African empire whose independence stood as a beacon of dignity. In turn, Menelik II viewed Washington as a vital global partner free from European imperial designs.

This alliance deepened significantly during the post-World War II era. Ethiopia became a strategic anchor for US policy in East Africa, with Ethiopian forces fighting alongside American troops under the United Nations' command during the Korean War.

In the decades that followed, joint agreements enabled pivotal intelligence-sharing, military training, and economic modernization across the Horn of Africa.

Today's diplomatic reset marks a return to this historic baseline – realigning a long-standing alliance for the complexities of 21st-century security and commerce.

Codifying the partnership in Washington

On May 11, 2026, Ethiopian Foreign Minister Dr. Gedion Timothewos and the US Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs Allison Hooker signed a permanent bilateral strategic consultation framework agreement in Washington. Designed to rotate annually between both capitals under senior leadership, the framework is built upon three comprehensive pillars:

- Economic prosperity and investment: Expanding bilateral trade flows and direct commercial engagement.
- Defense and security cooperation: Deep-

ening joint security engagements and intelligence-sharing.

- Regional peace and stability: Aligning diplomatic strategies across the Horn of Africa and the Red Sea corridor.

High-level alignment: From security to AI

Defense cooperation, long the bedrock of bilateral ties, has swiftly returned to a high level of operational trust. Strategic and military alignment between both nations was recently showcased through the co-hosting of the 2026 Africa Logistics and Communications Symposium in Addis Ababa.

Bringing together military command leaders and defense delegates from 40 African nations, the gathering reaffirmed Ethiopia's historical position as an indispensable anchor for continental security, military logistics, and regional peacekeeping.

Beyond traditional security, the partnership is rapidly expanding into frontier sectors. During high-level talks in Washington, which included meetings between Timothewos and US Secretary of State Marco Rubio, as well as key Ethiopian economic and national security leadership, both sides reaffirmed their commitment to elevating historic cooperation to an advanced strategic phase.

This momentum is already translating into direct enterprise. A high-level US Department of Commerce delegation recently visited Ethiopian innovation centers to evaluate joint ventures in artificial intelligence and tech start-up acceleration.

Simultaneously, bilateral trade talks have highlighted vast opportunities for foreign direct investment in critical minerals and mining, shifting the economic dynamic away from aid dependency toward commercial enterprise.

A realigned axis for modern stability

The trajectory of this relationship reflects a mutually beneficial recalibration. For Washington, a stable and economically dynamic anchor state in the Horn of Africa provides an essential counterweight in a volatile region.

For Addis Ababa, direct collaboration with US defense, technology, and capital markets accelerates long-term modernization goals.

As history demonstrates – from Menelik II's court to the modern halls of diplomacy – the relationship between these two sovereign nations functions best when grounded in mutual respect and strategic alignment. Both capitals are restoring an indispensable partnership built for the modern era.

The writer is an international relations professional based in Addis Ababa, specializing in Horn of Africa geopolitics and war journalism, and the author of two books on Nile diplomacy.

From the Danube to the Negev

• By SHARON PARDO

The Danube is running so low that history is resurfacing.

Along stretches of one of Europe's great rivers, falling water levels have exposed German warships sunk during the final months of the Second World War. The images are dramatic. But what is emerging from the Danube is more than the wreckage of Europe's past. It is a warning about its future.

Across the continent, extreme heat is drying soils and vegetation and putting growing pressure on water resources. Spain, already scarred by devastating fires in recent years, is again confronting heat waves and fears of another severe wildfire season. What once appeared primarily a Mediterranean problem is becoming a European one.

In climatic terms, the Mediterranean is moving north. Conditions once associated with Europe's southern periphery are reaching deeper into the continent.

For Israel, none of this is unfamiliar. Water scarcity has shaped Israeli policy since the country's creation. Necessity drove Israel to invest in desalination, wastewater recycling, drip irrigation, efficient agricultural use, and the careful management of a resource it could never take for granted.

According to a 2025 OECD country report, Israel's five desalination plants now supply more than 80% of its domestic urban water, while more than 87% of wastewater effluent is reused, primarily for agriculture.

Israel did not develop these capabilities because environmentalism was fashionable. It developed them because there was no alternative.

That experience is becoming increasingly relevant to Europe – and could provide a new basis for cooperation between Europe and Israel.

Water scarcity is only part of the challenge. Across southern Europe, prolonged heat and drought increasingly interact with soil degradation, stressed vegetation, and wildfire risk. Here, too, decades of Israeli research into agriculture, water, and ecosystems under arid and semi-arid conditions offer a natural basis for collaboration.

The European Union itself recognizes the scale and systemic nature of the challenge. Its Water Resilience Strategy calls for greater efficiency, modernized infrastructure, reduced leakage, increased investment, and stronger international cooperation.

By linking water resilience to competitiveness, disaster preparedness, and security, the strategy signals a broader shift:

climate adaptation is moving from the margins of environmental policy to the center of European economic and security planning.

It should also become a new pillar of relations between Europe and Israel.

Europe hardly lacks expertise of its own. Its strengths in river basin management, forest protection, ecosystem restoration, satellite monitoring, and civil protection complement Israel's experience with water recycling, precision irrigation, drought management, dryland agriculture, and land degradation.

Israel, which has itself relied on European assistance during major wildfires, has as much to gain from such cooperation as Europe does.

The opportunities are practical. Cooperation could range from early wildfire detection, drought forecasting, and ecological recovery to wastewater recycling, precision irrigation, leakage reduction, and technologies that allow societies to do more with increasingly scarce water supplies.

There is no need to start from scratch. Israel already participates in European research and innovation networks. The EU's Partnership for Research and Innovation in the Mediterranean Area, PRIMA, brings together countries from both sides of the Mediterranean to develop solutions in water management, agriculture, and food systems. Horizon Europe provides another powerful framework for scientific collaboration.

WHAT IS missing is not the will to work together. It is strategic ambition.

The EU and Israel should turn these scattered initiatives into an EU-Israel Climate Resilience Partnership, focused initially on three areas: water security, dryland agriculture and land restoration, and wildfire prevention and response.

Such a partnership would go beyond existing research cooperation by connecting universities and research institutes with municipalities, water authorities, civil protection agencies, governments, and private companies.

It could establish joint demonstration projects in European regions particularly exposed to drought and fire, including Spain, Greece, Cyprus, and Italy.

It could provide a platform for testing Israeli technologies under European conditions and European technologies under Israeli ones, while creating permanent networks among scientists, emergency services, and policymakers.

In time, such cooperation could extend beyond Israel and the EU. Climate change is transforming the Mediterranean into an increasingly shared ecological space. Jor-

dan, Egypt, Morocco, the UAE, and other regional partners face many of the same pressures. Water scarcity, drought, and wildfire are challenges that do not respect political borders.

There is also a broader political reason for doing this now.

Relations between Israel and Europe are going through one of their most difficult periods in decades. The war in Gaza and profound disagreements over Israeli-Palestinian issues, humanitarian access, and international law will not disappear because Europeans and Israelis work together on irrigation or wildfire prevention. Climate cooperation cannot resolve those disputes, nor should it be expected to.

But foreign policy does not require agreement on everything before joint action becomes possible on anything.

Indeed, one of the dangers facing relations between Israel and Europe today is the temptation to allow disagreement in one field to paralyze cooperation in others: science, universities, trade, culture, and technology. Climate adaptation demonstrates why that logic is shortsighted.

A wildfire in Spain does not ask how Madrid voted at the United Nations. Falling water levels in the Danube are indifferent to the state of relations between Jerusalem and Brussels.

Climate change has an unusual ability to strip international relations of their rhetoric. It forces governments to confront physical realities.

And one of those realities is geography. Europe, Israel, and their Mediterranean neighbors are increasingly confronting variations of the same problem: how to sustain prosperous societies in a region becoming hotter, drier, and more vulnerable to extreme events.

For decades, Europe possessed knowledge and institutions that Israel sought to emulate. Today, in some fields, Israel has accumulated experience that Europe can use. In others, Israel has much to learn from Europe.

That is precisely what partnership means. The wrecks emerging from the Danube belong to a Europe defined by conflict. Their reappearance should serve as a warning of a different kind. The challenges now rising to the surface will not be solved by countries retreating from one another.

From the Danube River to the Negev Desert, climate change is redrawing the map. Europe and Israel should ensure that their relationship changes with it.

The writer is a senior fellow at the Jewish People Policy Institute (JPPI) and a professor of European studies and international relations in the Department of Politics and Government at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev.

Colombia quake toll at 244 as rescue efforts press on

BOGOTA (Reuters) – Rescue efforts across western Colombia carried into a second day on Tuesday as emergency workers dug through collapsed buildings and flattened homes, amid expectations that the death toll from the country's most powerful earthquake in decades could rise.

The 7.4-magnitude earthquake tore through Colombia's coffee-growing heartland early on Monday, killing at least 224 people.

The quake reduced multi-story buildings to rubble in cities such as Pereira and Cali, and it cracked apart one of the towers of a historic cathedral in the city of Manizales.

Emergency teams aided by police, soldiers, and volunteers worked through the night with excavators and, at times, their bare hands, hunting for survivors beneath debris.

In Cali, home to about 2.2 million people, at least 85 were killed. Dozens of buildings were left leaning precariously or destroyed outright, forcing residents into the streets.

Several of the top floors of one of the city's hospitals – some dedicated to pediatric care – collapsed, leaving a number of patients trapped and forcing some 600 others to be tended to on a street strewn with rubble, hospital director Irne Torres Castro told Caracol television.

Carmen Yasmin Garcia, 43, a Cali resident volunteering with rescue teams, said on Monday



A DRONE VIEW shows buildings damaged in the earthquake, in Cali, Colombia, on Monday. (Raquel Cunha/Reuters)

afternoon that her group had freed seven people from a collapsed building, but four others and a dog remained trapped.

"A moment ago, there was scratching, but now we can't hear anything; we still have faith that the dog is alive and we can get these people out," Garcia said. "We need people with sticks and spades; the more people lending a hand, the better."

In Pereira, capital of the hard-hit state of Risaralda, authorities reported 66 dead.

The city also bore some of the most visible destruction, with entire residential blocks reduced to piles of concrete and

twisted steel. Verified videos posted on social media showed the city's airport violently swaying during the quake, with large chunks of the ceiling collapsing as people sheltered.

Another 13 people died in Choco, the rural province closest to the earthquake's epicenter.

Security forces headed to Cali

President Abelardo De La Espriella, who assumed power just days ago, said 35 people died in Cali alone, while 188 were missing. He said 1,000 members of the security forces would be deployed to the city

by dawn, following reports of looting. Cali, as well as Pereira, implemented curfews on Monday night.

"Our intention is to cooperate in any way necessary. Here, there are no distinctions or ideological divisions when it comes to defending our people or showing solidarity," De La Espriella told journalists on Monday evening.

The disaster has drawn comparisons to a deadly 1999 earthquake that devastated the same coffee-growing region, killing over 1,000 people, as well as to catastrophic quakes that killed more than 6,300 in neighboring Venezuela in June.

Due to Iran threat, Trump left Turkey on secret flight via catering truck – report

WASHINGTON (Reuters) – US President Donald Trump took a secret military flight from Turkey last month in an operation that involved being moved between aircraft in a catering truck, an extraordinary deception prompted by an Iranian assassination threat, *The Washington Post* reported.

The White House said at the time that the president was flying aboard Air Force One from Turkey, where he had attended a NATO summit, to Britain. But moments after Trump had boarded the plane, he left it in secret via the catering truck and boarded another aircraft, the *Post* said on Monday, quoting unnamed sources.

The New York Times carried a similar report, quoting unnamed US officials.

Trump had taken a newly renovated Qatari-donated jet to Ankara for the NATO summit but unexpectedly announced he would use an older Air Force One when departing the country, a move that prompted questions about the newer plane's security.

The trip to NATO was the first international travel for the new plane – its speedy upgrades triggered questions over its cost and security – and took place as hostilities escalated with Iran, which borders Turkey.

Before departing Ankara, Trump said on Truth Social that he would use an older baby blue Air Force One plane "for old time's sake" to fly to Royal Air Force Mildenhall station in Britain, while the new plane stopped at the same base so US service members stationed there could tour the aircraft.

After Trump boarded the old Air Force One in front of cameras in Ankara, he was secretly shuttled by the airport catering truck to a smaller plane, an Air Force C-32A (a variant of the Boeing 757), the *Post* reported, citing a US official familiar with the operation and corroborating material it reviewed.

Secret switch

The deception operation was triggered by a credible threat to Trump, the *Post* reported.

A similar operation had taken place in 2000, when President Bill Clinton used an unmarked executive jet to fly into Pakistan while sending his formal Air Force One as a decoy.

On this occasion, the journalists who thought they were traveling with Trump on the older Air Force One, which was effectively used as a decoy, reported being advised to keep their window shades in the press cabin closed. The *Post* said aside from reporters, some White House staff also believed that the president was on board.

When asked later by reporters why they had to keep their shades shut during the flight, Trump said it was because they were "probably on a dangerous flight." He went on to say: "But if I go, you go. Right?"

The C-32A carrying Trump flew to Britain and arrived at around 10:20 p.m., with the older Air Force One and media arriving minutes later, the *Post* reported. It was not clear, the paper said, how Trump was moved from the C-32A back to the older Air Force One.

Trump's traveling press pool reported that he climbed down the stairs of the older Air Force One at 10:56 p.m.

He gave the press a peace sign but didn't walk over to talk to them. He then spent some time greeting service members before walking to the new, Qatar-donated plane.

When asked for comment on the revelation of a secret flight on a third plane, the White House provided a statement from Communications Director Steve Cheung saying the Qatari-donated jet has been fitted with high-level security protocols that ensure the safety of the president and his staff.

"As the president has said recently, there are many enemies of America who have their sights on him, and we use every tool at our disposal to address those threats," Cheung said. It was the same statement provided to *The Washington Post*.

The Pentagon did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

'Russia launched N. Korean missiles to kill 6 in Ukraine'

• Reuters

Russian forces killed six people early on Tuesday in an attack on the southeastern Ukrainian city of Zaporizhzhia that involved North Korean ballistic missiles, President Volodymyr Zelensky said.

Six others were killed overnight in the Ukrainian regions of Dnipropetrovsk and Donetsk, and a Russian attack on Kyiv caused fires in the capital, Ukrainian officials said.

Regional governor Ivan Fedorov posted photos online showing buildings and vehicles ablaze in Zaporizhzhia, where officials said 20 people had also been wounded.

"The city was hit by North Korean ballistic missiles, Zircos (anti-ship missiles) and KABs (precision-guided aerial bombs)," Zelensky wrote on Telegram.

"A brutal attack calculated to inflict maximum damage on civilian infrastructure."

Russia did not immediately say whether it had used North Korean missiles in the attack on Zaporizhzhia. There was no comment from Pyongyang.

Russia's Defence Ministry

said its forces had struck the Nova Poshta sorting complex in Kyiv, which it said was used to store and distribute dual-use goods, including components for drones and electronic warfare equipment.

Russian forces also struck a metallurgical plant in Zaporizhzhia that produces flat-rolled steel, which it said was used by the Ukrainian military, the ministry said.

The attacks followed a Ukrainian drone strike that Russian authorities said on Monday had killed at least 13 people and wounded 39 in the Russian city of Nizhnekamsk, one of the heaviest civilian tolls in Russia in months.

Russia has continued heavy bombardments of Ukraine, trying to exploit Ukraine's shortage of high-end air defenses by using more ballistic missiles, which are particularly hard to shoot down.

Kyiv has increasingly been striking Russia, including hitting oil refineries and warehouses used by e-commerce retailer Wildberries.

Ukraine said on Tuesday it had targeted an oil refinery in the Russian city of Orsk in its latest strikes.

Ukrainian prisoners recount torture in captivity

• By DAVID BRUNNSTROM and ANDREA SHALAL

Former Ukrainian detainees and Ukrainian officials accused Russia on Monday of systematically torturing prisoners of war and civilian detainees, holding captives incommunicado and subjecting them to beatings, electric shocks and sexual abuse, with thousands still in captivity.

Russia rejected the allegations made at an informal UN Security Council meeting, with its Deputy UN Representative Maria Zabolotskaya calling it "a disinformation campaign" and alleging that Russian prisoners in Ukraine were subjected to "torture, degradation, and moral and physical abuse."

Khuan Alberto Leyva Garcia, still an active member of the Ukrainian military, said his Russian captors subjected him to every imaginable form of torture during his 1,183 days in captivity.

"Yes ... I was tortured," he told reporters after the UN meeting. "Anything you can think of that can be done to hurt, humiliate a man, unwillingly. Anything that comes to your mind – not only ver-

bal, physical abuse, daily beatings, electrocution, excessive, excessive exercises in freezing cold when it's minus degrees ... sexual abuse. Everything that can be applied to a person to make them break mentally. It was all applied to me and most of my comrades."

Garcia said he was lucky to survive, but two of his friends were beaten to death in detention centers in the Donetsk region. Prisoners were held in "overcrowded barracks without adequate conditions," where "almost all POWs were ill with dysentery" and many were starving, he told the UN meeting.

A Ukrainian with a Cuban father, he said guards targeted him particularly because of his Latino name, accusing him of being "a mercenary and an American spy."

Crimean Tatar activist Leniye Umerova, released in a prisoner exchange in 2024, said she was detained while trying to visit her seriously ill father in Crimea.

She described being moved through "seven detention facilities" in what she called "a carousel of repression" and accused Russia of using torture against Ukrainians in captivity.

Oleg Gushin of the Ukrainian government's Coordination Headquarters for the Treatment of Prisoners of War said Ukrainian prisoners were "killed and tortured" in detention.

He said Kyiv had identified "more than 300 places of detention" in Russia and occupied Ukrainian territory and that while more than 9,000 Ukrainians had been returned through exchanges, "thousands" remained in Russian captivity.

Ukraine's Chargé d'Affaires Volodymyr Pavlichenko called for greater international pressure and accountability for Russia's treatment of prisoners.

'Widespread and systematic'

UN Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights Claudia Fuentes Julio said UN monitoring showed that "widespread and systematic torture and ill-treatment of Ukrainian prisoners of war and civilian detainees by the Russian Federation authorities continues," including sexual violence.

Since February 2022, the UN Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) had docu-

mented the execution of 129 Ukrainian prisoners of war at the beginning of their captivity and the deaths of 48 in custody, resulting from torture, denial of medical care, or other inhumane conditions of detention, she said.

She said more than 95% of Ukrainian prisoners of war interviewed reported experiencing torture or ill-treatment.

She added that more than half also reported sexual violence, including "rape, gang rape, beating while nude, beatings to the genitals, electric shocks to the genitals and nipples, and degrading treatment of a sexualized nature."

She said the UN had received "consistent accounts of severe beatings with objects such as batons, heavy belts, and wood, electric shocks, dog attacks, mock executions, and other forms of torture."

Fuentes Julio said the OHCHR had also documented torture and ill-treatment of Russian and third-country national prisoners of war held by Ukraine, but "on a fundamentally different scale."

She said about half of Russian and third-country prisoners interviewed reported abuse during initial stages of captivity. (Reuters)

Study: Dogs can spot emotions in our faces

BERLIN (Reuters) – A peek inside dogs' brains revealed man's best friend can distinguish emotions in people's faces, researchers at the University of Vienna have found, providing what they said was the first ever evidence of such an ability.

In the study, researchers used machine learning to analyze brain scans of 12 dogs as the animals viewed images of human faces showing different emotions, the university said in a press release on Tuesday.

Researchers found that brain regions linked to higher cognitive functions and reward processing – the temporal cortex and caudate nucleus – were activated only by images of happy strangers.

Anger, fear, and sadness

did not trigger those regions, according to the study, published in *iScience* on Monday.

However, when the researchers looked at the whole brain, they found distinct activity patterns that differentiated fear from anger and sadness, providing the first evidence that dogs can tell apart specific negative facial expressions.

Dogs "have evolved with us to understand our expressions and cooperate with us, and recognizing that can change how we communicate with and care for them," senior author Laura Cuaya said.

The researchers next plan to investigate how dogs integrate other cues, including body language, voice nuances, and scent, to interpret the humans around them.

UN: Extreme heat more frequent, intense

• By OLIVIA LE POIDEVIN

GENEVA (Reuters) – Periods of extreme heat are becoming more frequent, intense, and longer-lasting as climate change warms the planet, the UN weather agency said on Tuesday, noting changes since the famously hot European summer of 1976.

Parts of Europe are enduring their fifth heat wave of a summer marked by drought, wildfires, and record-breaking temperatures.

"Extreme heat is becoming more frequent, more intense, it's lasting longer and covering much wider areas than in the cooler climates of the past," John Kennedy, the World Meteorological Organization's head of climate information, told a press briefing in Geneva.

Kennedy said the current pattern of heat across Europe, the world's fastest-warming continent, reflected the interaction between a persistent pattern of high-pressure systems across the Northern Hemisphere and a warmer climate.

The high-pressure systems trap warm air, reduce cloud cover, and block cooler air from moving in, allowing heat to build over large regions for days or weeks.

El Niño – the naturally occurring climate pattern that typ-



A COUPLE protects itself and a child from the sun with an umbrella during a heatwave in New York City last week. (Jeenah Moon/Reuters)

ically boosts global temperatures – was not contributing to Europe's heat this year because conditions in the tropical Pacific are currently neutral, he said.

Changes over the past five decades

Kennedy noted that June 1976 featured a broadly similar pattern of high and low pressure systems to those seen this

year, but he said the outcomes were very different because of decades of global warming.

"The picture for 1976 is one of a few isolated areas [for] above average temperatures in a much cooler world," he noted, whereas today "the picture is reversed" with much of the globe experiencing above-average temperatures and only a few isolated cooler regions.

Exceptionally warm seas and parched soils are amplifying temperatures across Europe, Kennedy said.

Marine heat waves in the Mediterranean Sea and waters west of Europe are fueling hotter conditions on land by providing additional background warmth for persistent high-pressure systems, he added.

Romanian reactor may close tomorrow

BUCHAREST (Reuters) – Romanian state-owned nuclear power producer Nuclearelectrica could shut down its last working reactor on Thursday as levels on the Danube River continue to fall, it said on Tuesday, despite efforts to divert cooling water to the plant.

Record-low river levels forced Nuclearelectrica to shut down one reactor in late July. The company has two reactors in Cernavoda on the Danube, accounting for a fifth of the country's power output.

Romania has taken unprecedented measures to keep the country's sole working reactor running, including detonating a rock obstruction out of the water, dredging the riverbed, and sinking rock-filled barges in the Danube to redirect flows around the power plant.

Levels on the Danube, Europe's second-longest river, fell to a new all-time low of 1,370 cubic meters of water per second at its Romanian entry point on Tuesday, a director at the state water management agency said, adding the shut-down was "unavoidable."

Journalism: More than just a profession



GRAPEVINE

• By GREER FAY CASHMAN

FAREWELLS ARE almost always sad, and the farewell that veteran broadcaster **Oren Nahari** received from KAN Reshet Bet radio and several academics during his final program in the series *Shabbat with Oren Nahari* was sad but filled with goodwill and admiration.

Nahari, acknowledged as one of the great intellectuals among Israeli broadcasters, announced several months ago that he had been diagnosed with ALS. This debilitating, terminal nerve disease gradually paralyzes the whole body, including the ability to speak.

Three and a half years ago, when he was still seemingly healthy, Nahari launched the program, stepping into what he said were “the huge shoes” of the late **Yitzhak Noy**, who died of cancer in 2022.

Noy was another of KAN’s Reshet Bet intellectuals. He was also an historian and author, as is Nahari. Noy’s manner was much more authoritarian than that of Nahari, but they shared an interest in bringing great moments in history to public attention.

Nahari referred to this in his farewell address, when he said: “Journalism is more than a profession. It is a mission to bring information to the public.”

Noy’s programs are frequently rebroadcast on KAN Reshet Bet, and presumably the same will happen with Nahari’s programs.

Like many great journalists, he started as a sports reporter. He didn’t feel comfortable in that position and found his niche when transferred to the political beat.

In recent weeks, his voice began to lose its clarity and its pace, and Nahari announced that his deteriorating health precluded him from continuing.

He was disappointed, Nahari said, that he had been unable to complete his intention to deal with the 20th century, till its end. All of his interviewees on that final program said how much his audience would miss him.

Two of them, Prof. **Eytan Gilboa**, an expert on American history and politics, and Nobel Prize laureate Prof. **Aaron Ciechanover**, noted how much they had enjoyed their interviews with Nahari over the years.

Gilboa said that Nahari’s style was more in the nature of a conversation than an interview. Both he and Ciechanover, along with **Yair Stern**, a former senior executive with the Israel Broadcasting Authority who initially brought Nahari to the radio, noted that he had the rare gift of presenting in-depth, detailed information in a manner understandable to everyone.

NOW THAT **Gilad Erdan** is angling to return to the Knesset, Magen David Adom will have to search for a new global president.

Erdan received the appointment after completing his tour of duty as the permanent representative of Israel to the United Nations. But it’s a position that he will probably have to give up if he returns to being a legislator, and possibly once more, a minister.

AS OF today, Wednesday, President **Isaac Herzog** will have an additional title on his CV and can be addressed as Dr. Herzog.

It’s an international example of the saying, “If Mohammed cannot go to the mountain, the mountain must come to Mohammed.”

Herzog was due to receive an honorary doctorate from the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York last May, but was unable to attend the JTS graduation ceremony.

Instead, he sent his address by video. But no Jewish institute of higher learning would be willing to give up on conferring an honorary degree on the president of Israel. So the mountain came to Mohammed, and the degree will be duly conferred, minus the excitement of a graduation ceremony.

THIS WEEK, Jewish communities around the world are marking the beginning of the Hebrew calendar month of Elul – the start of a period of introspection and penitential prayers – but few will note the significance of the anniversary of Elul 17, 5699.

That was the date of the outbreak of the Second World War and the Nazi invasion of Poland. It is customary to mark the civil calendar date – September 1, 1939.

In addition, the remnants and descendants of residents of specific communities

in Europe, but mostly Poland, commemorate the date when Jewish residents were confined to ghettos, or the date of the first deportation to a hard labor camp or a death camp.

Eighty-one years have passed since the war ended. With rare exceptions, the only Holocaust survivors who are left are the children of that war who have little to no memory of what befell them.

They may know how many members of their respective families were murdered or died of disease or starvation. Still, they cannot remember the faces of their parents unless a relative who left Europe before the war has photographs.

But even 81 years after the war, new books and documentaries about Holocaust heroes, victims, and survivors continue to be released.

Some are autobiographies that lay locked in a drawer for decades. Most are biographies written by descendants or authors with a particular interest in the subject character, or the Holocaust per se. Some are factual, and some are fiction based on fact.

Among the latest documentaries relating to the Holocaust is *The Choice*, which takes viewers into the life of Hungarian-born Auschwitz survivor, psychologist, and *New York Times* best-selling author Dr. **Edith Eger**, who died in California in April of this year.

Eger, who was 98, specialized in post-traumatic stress disorder. Some of her books won several prizes. The documentary is named after one of the books in which she wrote: “Victimhood comes from the inside. No one can make you a victim but you. We become victims not because of what happens to us but when we choose to hold on to our victimization.”

Choosing not to be a victim was not easy. In another book, *The Ballerina of Auschwitz*, Eger recounted how, as a trained ballerina at age 16, she was forced to dance for Nazi **Josef Mengele** (the infamous Angel of Death) on the night her parents were sent to the gas chambers.

The documentary, produced and directed by **John David Coles**, explores Jewish resilience, Eger’s life and teachings, and her legacy of healing.

It includes former Hamas hostage **Sapir Cohen** and **Iris Haim**, the mother of **Yotam Haim**, who was mistakenly killed by IDF troops after escaping captivity. Both women benefited from Eger’s teachings.

SHOULD ETHICS stand in the way of creativity? The question was raised last week in *The New York Times* by **Dana Thomas**, the biographer of celebrated fashion designer **John Galliano**, who will have an exhibition at New York’s Metropolitan Museum of Art next May.

“Why is the Met honoring fashion’s antisemitic provocateur?” asked Thomas.

She then quoted the Met’s announcement, “Alongside Galliano’s extraordinary creative accomplishments, the exhibition will address the derogatory conduct that fundamentally altered his career and public reception.”

“In doing so, the exhibition will consider how artistic achievement should be understood alongside ethical accountability.”

The complexity of an unethical artist and the acceptance of their work is not new.

In July 2001, world-famous conductor and pianist **Daniel Barenboim** incurred the ire of many Israelis, especially Holocaust survivors, when he introduced a work by composer **Richard Wagner** at the Israel Festival.

Wagner, who was a great favorite of the Nazis, was also a notorious antisemite, and many wondered how Barenboim, a Jew who spent a large part of his youth in Israel, where Wagner’s music was banned, could break such a strongly held taboo.

After conducting a work by **Robert Schumann**, Barenboim turned to the audience and asked who wanted to hear Wagner. There was a moment of shocked silence, then pandemonium and a debate. In the final analysis, a large swathe of the audience walked out, but just as many remained to hear the music.

CAMERA, AN acronym for the Committee for Accuracy in Middle East Reporting and Analysis, is joining forces with IBCA (Israel Britain and the Commonwealth Association) to reveal how the media erases Palestinian responsibility for their actions.

The speaker will be Adam Levik, the UK

manager of CAMERA, whose address is headed “More than just victims.” Levik is considered to be a leading expert on media bias, antisemitism, and anti-Israel bias in the media.

He is frequently in demand as a speaker at international conferences on contemporary antisemitism and media accountability. The venue is 5 Hagila Street, Netanya. The date is Wednesday, September 2, at 8 p.m. The cost is NIS 180 for members and NIS 195 for non-members.

IN A newly created position, Noach Hacker has been appointed Vice President of Policy at the Israel Democracy Institute. An economist and public policy expert, Hacker comes to Jerusalem from Washington, where he served as the State of Israel’s Economic Minister and the senior economic representative of Israel’s Ministry of Finance. Before that, he held various senior positions in the Ministry of Finance in Israel.

While in the US, he frequently engaged with the US administration, members of Congress, regulators, financial institutions, technology companies, and agencies dedicated to economic security.

On the home front, Hacker has worked in both the private and the public sectors.

US AMBASSADOR Mike Huckabee is known to be one of Israel’s most ardent supporters. Most recently, he committed himself to encouraging a revival in tourism from the US to Israel.

“I will continue to be an ambassador for Israel wherever I go,” he told a meeting of members of the Israel Tourism Recovery Forum. “I will continue encouraging Americans to visit Israel, experience it firsthand, and discover the reality for themselves.”

In addition to senior members of the Tourism Ministry, the meeting was attended by **Eli Cohen**, the president of the Israel Hotel Association, **David Fattal**, the founder and owner of the Fattal Hotel Group, and **Rami Levi**, the founder and president of Catalyst Group International.

Yossi Fatael, the CEO of the Israel Incoming Tour Operators Association, **Avi Zak**, the owner of the Drisco Hotel in Tel Aviv-Jaffa’s historic American Colony, **Hagar Shiran**, the CEO of the Israel Hotel Association, and **Romi Gorodisky**, the deputy general manager of the Israel Hotel Association, were also in attendance.

Topics raised in the meeting included the launch of new air travel routes; the increase in direct flights between Israel and popular destinations; tourism as an engine for economic growth, with an emphasis on the US continuing to be Israel’s most important source for incoming tourism; and continued cooperation between the forum and the American travel industry.

Given Huckabee’s extensive experience in bringing Christian groups from the US to Israel, Cohen suggested introducing a program similar to Birthright for young Evangelicals.

IN RECENT weeks, graduates of fashion design schools at the University of Haifa, the Shenkar College of Engineering and Design, the Holon Institute of Technology, and the Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design, among others, have been displaying their creative abilities – proof that fashion design is still a desirable profession nationwide.

Some graduates may become big names, such as **Ronen Chen**, **Alon Livné**, **Kedem Sasson**, **Sharon Tal**, and the late **Alber Elbaz**. In contrast, others will remain in the ranks of the obscure, but the fact that all have graduated indicates that all have some degree of recognized talent.

Some of them may be seen at the Canada Israel Fashion Week 2026, which will be held between November 8 and November 12 at 7 Kremenetski Street, Tel Aviv-Yafo.

The fashion week will be produced by **Motty Reif**, who has a 40-year history in Israel’s fashion industry, starting as a model, then moving into production and entrepreneurship.

He is familiar with Israel’s top models, past and present, as well as with leading fashion designers and many who will be leaders in the future. Many young designers owe their chance to shine in postgraduate fashion shows thanks to Reif.

CULTURE WENT commercial at the Tel Aviv Museum of Art last week when some 150 of Israel’s leading architects and interior designers attended a VIP event hosted by Tambour to celebrate the launch of its new interior wall paint that goes by the name of Unique.

Based on ChromaFuse technology, Unique is due to hit the market by November. The launch event included a tour of the new exhibition by internationally known artist **Noma Bar**, coupled with the unveiling of “Tel Aviv Summer,” a work of art sponsored by and created with Tambour paints.

Among those present were Tambour CEO **Micha Schreier**, the director of the Tel Aviv Museum of Art, **Tania Coen-Uzzielli**, and exhibition curator **Yuval Saar**.

OF THE 33 United Nations member states that, in November 1947, voted “yes” to Resolution 181 calling for the partition of Palestine, 13 of those in favor were from Latin America.

They included Bolivia, Brazil, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala, Haiti, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, and Uruguay. Nearly all of these countries officially recognized Israel in 1948 and quick-



FOREIGN MINISTER Gideon Sa’ar and Colombia’s President Abelardo de la Espriella. (Lodis Studios)

ly established diplomatic relations with it.

Some even opened embassies in Jerusalem, but later moved to Tel Aviv. Others severed relations, restored them, then severed them again. Several Latin American countries accepted Jewish refugees during and after the Holocaust, but they also accepted Nazis fleeing prosecution.

Over the years, there have been many diplomatic ups and downs in Israel’s relations with Latin American countries, partially because of large concentrations of Palestinians in those countries, and partially because some Latin American governments disapprove of Israel’s actions in Gaza.

Some of those Latin American states that broke off relations were opposed to Israel’s actions in Lebanon. Among those with which Israel no longer has diplomatic ties are Belize, Cuba, Nicaragua, and Venezuela.

Israel is very keen to improve relations with all Latin American states and to reestablish ties with those with which it no longer has diplomatic ties.

With this in mind, Foreign Minister **Gideon Sa’ar** went to Colombia last week to attend the inauguration of President **Abelardo de la Espriella** and actually met with him the day before the ceremony.

Colombia’s new president invited Sa’ar to his office for a private meeting and lunch. The meeting lasted almost three hours, and the two discussed practical steps to strengthen diplomatic ties, security, and economic relations between their countries.

The president announced his decision to move the Colombian embassy to Jerusalem, and Sa’ar was profuse in his appreciation. The two are not strangers to each other. They had met previously in Buenos Aires last November.

Sa’ar, who has been doing a lot of traveling, was in Washington two weeks earlier and met with **Omar Bula Escobar**, who is Colombia’s new foreign minister.

Colombia is one of the countries whose previous government suspended all contact with Israel. In Washington, Sa’ar and Escobar agreed on the restoration of full diplomatic relations, the immediate appointment of ambassadors, and the lifting of visa requirements.

Sa’ar left Colombia before a powerful earthquake caused large-scale loss of life and the collapse of tall buildings.

HARDLY A week goes by without an announcement from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem that one or more of its faculty members have received a prestigious award, have been elected to high office in an important international organization, have been given a substantial grant for continued research, or have been named as one of the best in their field.

Among those who have most recently brought pride to the century-old institution is Prof. **Haim Sompolinsky**, professor emeritus of the Edmond and Lily Safra Center for Brain Sciences, and the resident professor of cellular biology and physics at the Center of Brain Science at Harvard University.

The Abdus Salam International Centre for Theoretical Physics has awarded Sompolinsky the 2026 Dirac Medal for theoretical physics.

This prize was established in 1985 in honor of Nobel Prize laureate **Paul A.M. Dirac**. It recognizes scientists whose groundbreaking work has advanced theoretical physics.

Sharing the honor with Sompolinsky are Prof. **Deepak Dhar** of the Indian Institute of Science Education and Research, Prof. **Bernard Derrida** of the Collège de France, and Prof. **Marc Mézard** of Bocconi University.

The awards ceremony will be held in 2027 in Trieste, Italy, where each laureate will deliver an address.

HOSPITAL PATIENTS in Israel may have noticed that meals are more appetizing and attractively presented than in years past. Part of the reason is that well-known chefs are taking an interest in hospital food.

One example is internationally acclaimed master chef **Gershon Schwadron**, who lives in Boca Raton, Florida. While on vacation in Israel, he ran a culinary workshop for kitchen staff at Laniado Hospital in Netanya to demonstrate that meals for patients in a pediatric department could be just as nutritious when prepared in a more colorful,

creative manner.

“Young patients deserve meals that are not only healthy, but comforting and enjoyable,” he said.

“If a delicious, beautifully presented meal can bring a smile to a child’s face and encourage them to eat, we’ve accomplished something meaningful,” Schwadron continued. Laniado’s executive chef agreed.

In other Laniado news, the hospital, in partnership with ALUT – The Israeli Society for Children and Adults with Autism, has established what it claims to be Israel’s first medical center with a pediatric emergency department that is both autism-friendly and trauma-informed.

By doing so, Laniado is setting a new national benchmark for emergency care for children who are on the spectrum or who have other developmental disabilities.

COUPLED WITH longevity is the joy of being a great-grandparent. Few of today’s Ashkenazi Jewish great-grandparents knew their grandparents, let alone their great-grandparents. Most of the European Jews of that era were victims of the Holocaust, as were some North African Jews.

But today, there is nothing unusual about being a great-grandparent. In Jerusalem, for instance, the Rabbanit **Miriam Hauer**, who, in 1943, fled with her family from her native Czechoslovakia to the Land of Israel, has a new great-grandchild nearly every month.

Another example is child Holocaust survivor **Rena Quint**. She never knew her grandparents, and her parents and brothers were murdered in the Holocaust. Now, Quint has close to 60 grandchildren and great-grandchildren, and remembers the names of all of them.

AUSTRALIA AND Australian Jewry have been in the news in local media a lot more in recent years. Unfortunately, much of the news is centered on growing antisemitism.

Australia was an attractive destination for emigrants from the Land of Israel long before the establishment of the state. Some of the children and grandchildren of these emigrants have returned to live in Israel.

According to Australian population census records, more than 11,000 people born in Israel live in Australia. Still, estimates of the total number of Israelis, including those born elsewhere who hold Israeli citizenship, are currently set at around 15,000.

Australian soldiers fought in Israel during World War I; Australia’s representative to the United Nations, **Herbert Vere “Doc” Evatt**, was in the forefront of lobbying for the partition plan, which was so vital to the quest for statehood; and Australia was the first country to vote “yes.”

Sydney and Jerusalem established diplomatic relations in 1949, and various Australian governors-general, prime ministers in and out of office, and foreign ministers have visited Israel. The first Israeli president to visit Australia was **Chaim Herzog** in November, 1986.

The Australian Jewish community is among the most pro-Israel in the world and supports numerous medical, cultural, agricultural, educational, social welfare, and sporting endeavors in Israel.

Both the Australia-Israel Chamber of Commerce (AICCWA) and the Israel-Australia Chamber of Commerce are very active. Further, both countries cooperate closely in innovation, science, and technology.

On October 20, the AICCWA will host the 2026 Israel Innovation Showcase, featuring Israeli technology experts from various fields who will travel to Sydney. The summit will move to Brisbane on October 22.

Just under a month later, on November 19, *The Jerusalem Post*, which has held summit conferences in the US, UAE, and Europe, will hold its first conference in Australia.

Like the innovation summit, this conference will also be held in Sydney, and will generate additional interest because it will take place three weeks after the Knesset elections.

But before that, on October 8, the *Post*, together with the Friends of Zion, will host a diplomatic conference at the Friends of Zion Museum in Jerusalem, featuring an international panel of Jewish and Christian speakers whose discussions will include global antisemitism, the Abraham Accords, and possible future alliances.

greerfc@gmail.com



US AMBASSADOR Mike Huckabee (center) with members of the Israel Tourism Recovery Forum. (Molly Goldberg)

A FULL PAGE OF EXERCISE FOR THE BRAIN
EVERY SUNDAY AND WEDNESDAY

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS

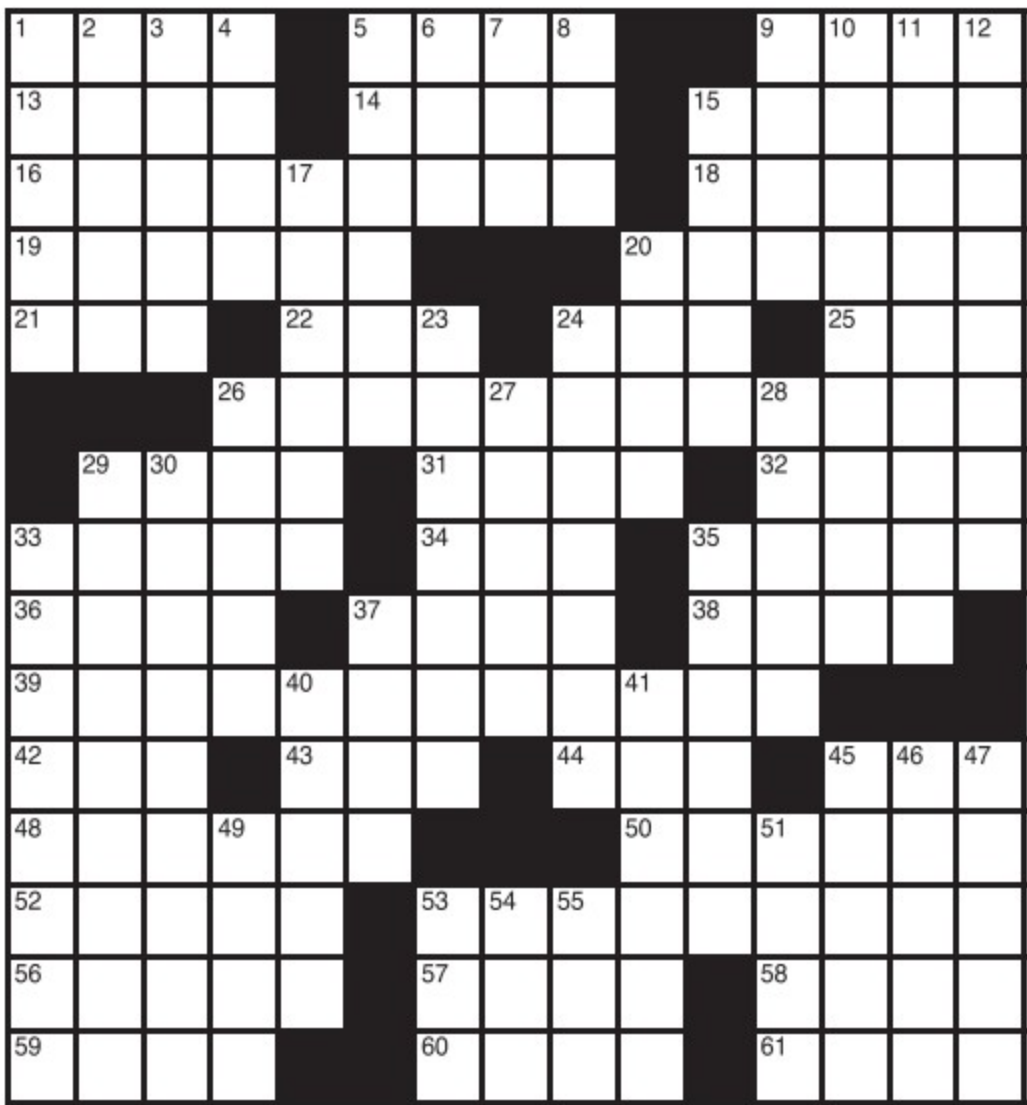
- 1 Succeed in a class
- 5 With 47-Down, tropical shade providers
- 9 Content warning letters
- 13 Two-tone apex predator
- 14 Inventor's jumping-off point
- 15 Underwater detector
- 16 "I like it!"
- 18 Location
- 19 Out like a light
- 20 Vintner's harvest
- 21 Top stripe of a pride flag
- 22 Lousy grade
- 24 "Goshi!"
- 25 Channel with music videos and "Reba" reruns
- 26 Bucket list item, perhaps
- 29 Statistical average
- 31 Jokes
- 32 Cunning plan
- 33 "A Change Is ___ Come"
- 34 Victor Wembanyama's org.
- 35 Features of 4c hair
- 36 A single time
- 37 Plant anchor
- 38 CPR pros
- 39 Not rigid
- 42 Seasonal vaccine target

- 43 Some undergrad degs.
- 44 Fleeting snooze
- 45 Pvt. trainer
- 48 Chicken ___ bleu
- 50 Throw trash away, but not in a trash can
- 52 An additional time
- 53 Distance shot in basketball, or what 16-, 26-, and 39-Across are altogether?
- 56 Sport with scrums
- 57 Component of steel
- 58 Lack of difficulty
- 59 Simple tops
- 60 Domestic fourleggers
- 61 "Their ___ Were Watching God"

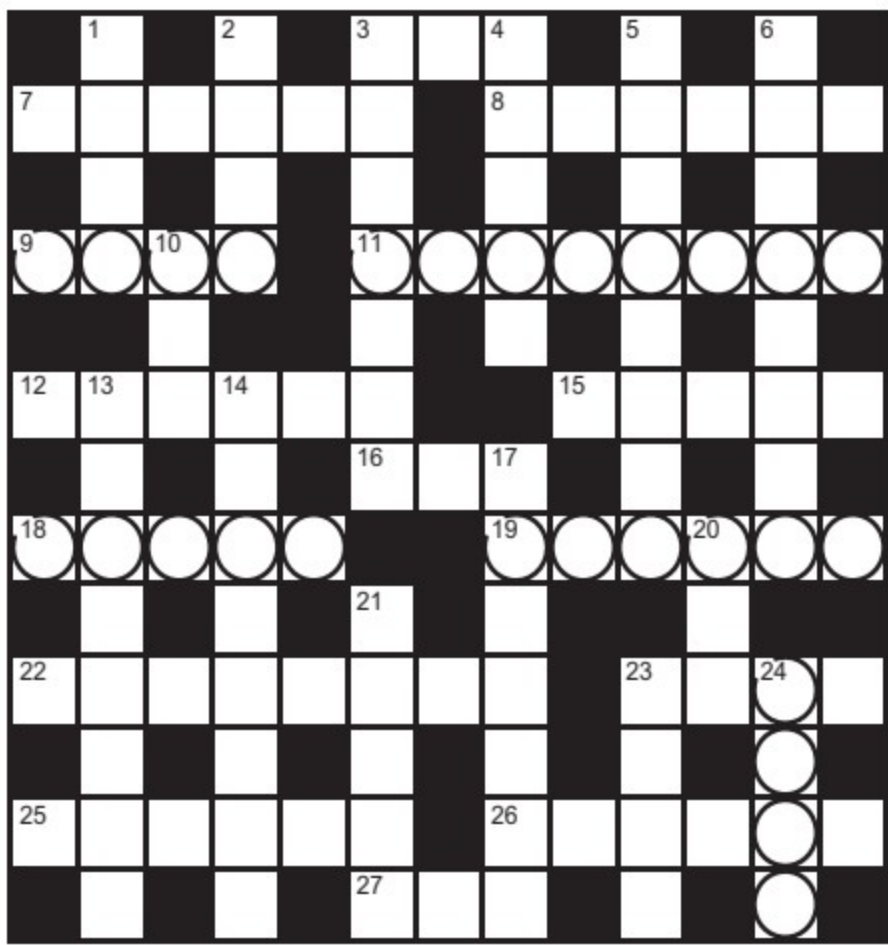
DOWN

- 1 Big name in seltzer water
- 2 Came up
- 3 Give a talking-to
- 4 "For goodness' ___!"
- 5 Animal enclosure with a namesake cipher
- 6 "And now, without further ___ ..."
- 7 Sign before Virgo
- 8 Ticked off
- 9 Mardi Gras city, familiarly
- 10 Signals called by a quarterback

- before each play
- 11 Protections against respiratory illnesses
- 12 Competes on a mat
- 15 Shopping jag
- 17 Arizona city near the Seven Sacred Pools
- 20 Precious stones
- 23 Creamy Christmas concoctions
- 24 Huge unit of mass
- 26 Pool divisions
- 27 Like a dirty word
- 28 Dirty
- 29 Actor's audition selection
- 30 Spur on
- 33 Transport on the way to sink a putt
- 35 "You hang on to that"
- 37 "Sinners" director
- 40 Dark wood
- 41 Makeover sites
- 45 Wander off
- 46 V-formation flyers
- 47 See 5-Across
- 49 "I call it!"
- 51 Old-school "you"
- 53 Guff
- 54 Metallic resource
- 55 Duped



QUICK CROSSWORD



Across

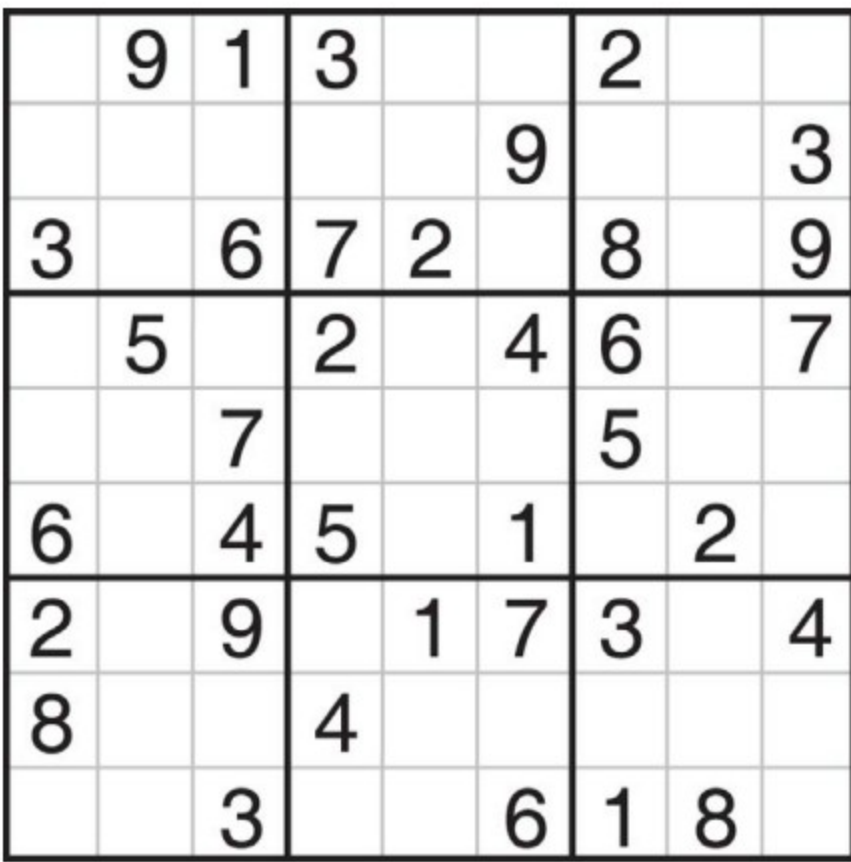
- 3 ___ whiz!(3)
- 7 "Blade ___" (1982 science fiction film) (6)
- 8 ___-eyed: Dim and watery (6)
- 9 Classic murder mystery board game (4)
- 11 Classic enterprise board game (8)
- 12 Like sheepdogs (6)
- 15 ___ WithUs (Pro-Israel non-profit) (5)
- 16 Salty body of water (3)
- 18 Settlers of ___ (Popular board game) (5)
- 19 Video game where you chase and are chased by ghosts (6)
- 22 ___motive: A secret reason

- for doing something (8)
- 23 "Postcards from the ___" (1990 film) (4)
- 25 "Once Is Not ___" (1973 Jacqueline Susann novel) (6)
- 26 ___ Street (TV program for kids) (6)
- 27 Formal neckwear (3)
- Down
- 1 Word by a door handle, often (4)
- 2 "Bury My Heart at Wounded ___" (1970 Dee Brown book) (4)
- 3 Beyonce has won 28 of them; Stevie Wonder 25 (7)
- 4 "___ and Ivory" (1982 Wonder/McCartney duet) (5)
- 5 Tyranny-like; Wielding absolute power (DISCO

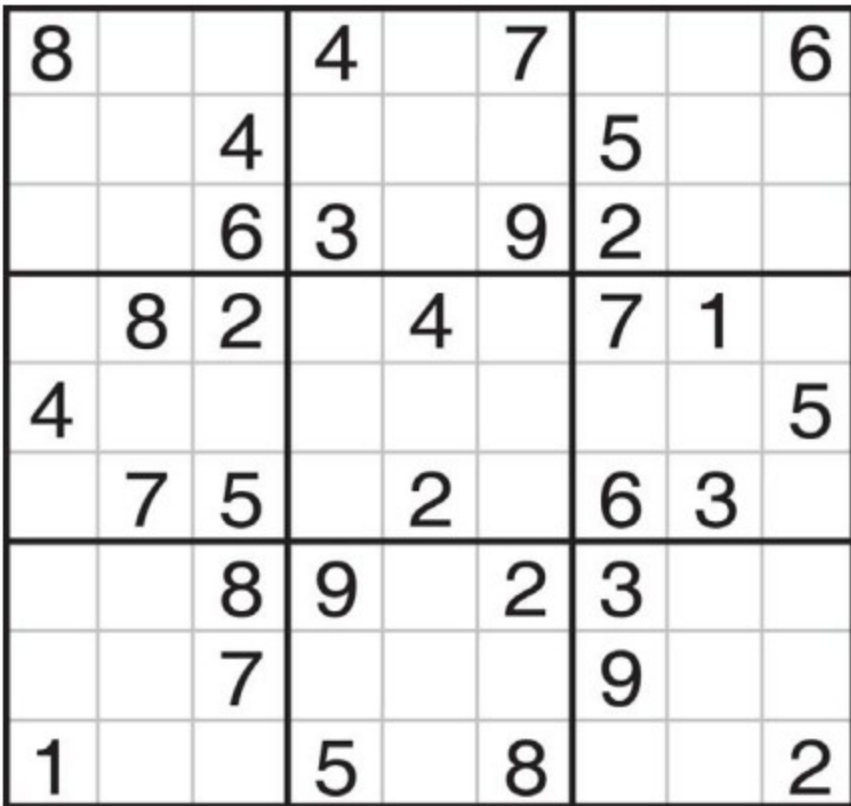
- PET anagram) (8)
- 6 It used to be called Ceylon (3,5)
- 10 "Born in the ___" (1984 Bruce Springsteen tune) (3)
- 13 Rush ___ into something: Be impetuous (HAD NO LEG anagram) (8)
- 14 The ___ Dead (Jerry Garcia rock band) (8)
- 17 Inform, give notice, update (APES RIP anagram) (7)
- 20 Pre-___ (major for future doctors) (3)
- 21 "___ Club" (1999 film with Brad Pitt) (5)
- 23 Direction of prayer of most Jews (4)
- 24 Risk, Clue or Trouble, e.g. (4)

SUDOKU

VERY EASY



EASY



MEDIUM



HARD



WORD-BUILDER
6185

G L E
E A

How many words of three or more letters, including plurals, can you make from the five letters, using each letter only once? No foreign words or words beginning with a capital are allowed. There's at least one five-letter word.

TODAY'S GOALS:
Good - 7 Excellent - 10 Amazing - 12

SOLUTION 6184: ors, orts, roo, roos, roost, root, roots, rot, rots, soot, sort, sot, stoor, too, tor, tors, torso.

HIDATO®
FIND THE PATH - SOLVE THE PUZZLE

Complete the grid so that numbers 1 - 134 connect horizontally, vertically or diagonally:

SOLUTION ON SUNDAY



5x5

Insert the missing letters to complete ten words - five across the grid and five down.

6145

PREVIOUS SOLUTION
(other combinations may be possible)

POACH
IGLOO
SLOPS
TENSE
EDGES

© THE PUZZLE COMPANY



ENTERTAINMENT BILLBOARD

TELEVISION

PROGRAMS

KAN HD (Y/H11)

06:04 This Morning - with Arieה Golan
08:00 Kalman Liberman
10:00 Kubanovick
12:00 News Flash
12:05 Are We Ready for Net Zero? - Episode 3
13:00 Innovation Nation - Episode 7
13:23 Garlic, Pepper & Olive Oil - Narkis
14:05 Dreams of Freedom - Episode 14
15:00 Glick and Tamar
17:00 The World Today - with Michal Reshef and
17:55 Kan at Six - with Maya Rachlin
18:55 The Hive - Episode 12
19:12 Seven - with Ayala Hasson
19:54 Kan News Edition
21:30 Come Dine With Me 10 - Eilat Week 4
22:02 When Will We Fall in Love? - Episode 3
22:30 Night News - with Sharon Davidovitch
23:00 The Hive - Episode 10
23:30 I'm Hot, I'm Cold - Episode 2

KESHET HD (Y/H12)

06:00 News Flash
06:10 The Morning Headlines
07:00 News Flash
07:10 The Morning News - With Niv Raskin
09:30 News Flash
09:35 Morning News - With Nesli and Yoav
11:00 Dancing with the Stars - The Quartets Co
12:30 Savri Maranan 7 - The ten plagues part 1
13:00 12 PM
15:00 Today's edition - With Amalya Duek and O
16:55 Five With - Rafi Reshef
17:55 6:00 P.M with...
19:00 Seven PM with - Keren Marciano
19:50 Main Edition
21:30 Dancing with the Stars
23:00 Guy Pines
23:30 Intimately with Rafi Reshef

RESHET HD (Y/H13)

06:00 This Morning - Preview
07:00 This Morning - Omer Yardeni & Rotem Isra
09:30 News Flash
09:35 Starting the Day - Yarden and Elad
10:00 News Flash
10:05 Starting the Day - Yarden and Elad
11:00 News Flash
11:05 Starting the Day - Yarden and Elad
12:00 News Flash
12:05 The Legal Countdown - Doron Herman
12:40 Power Couple - Episode 133
13:00 News Flash
13:05 Power Couple - Episode 133
14:00 News Flash
14:05 The Daily Report
15:00 Today's News - Eli Rachlin
16:55 Today's Talk - With Lucy Aharish
17:55 Moriya & Berko
18:59 Election Zone - Raviv Druker
19:50 The Main News Edition
21:15 Power Couple - Episode 14
23:15 The Tube - Guy Lerer
23:35 The Past Day - With Tal Shorer
00:00 The Experts

HOT CHANNEL 3 (H3)

08:00 Two Weeks in August
08:44 A Cruel Love: The Ruth Ellis Story
09:31 Wild Cards 3
10:14 Leonard and Hungry Paul
10:44 Two Weeks in August
11:28 A Cruel Love: The Ruth Ellis Story
12:16 The Heart Guy 3
13:06 Leonard and Hungry Paul
13:36 Wild Cards 3
14:19 Little House on the Prairie 2
15:08 Days of Our Lives
15:46 The Young and the Restless, Yr. 47
16:25 The Bold and The Beautiful (2 eps)
17:12 Days of Our Lives
17:54 The Young and the Restless, Yr. 47
18:31 Little House on the Prairie 2
19:18 Judge Judy 20
19:39 Connected 8
20:05 Connected 8
20:30 Secrets of the Mountain
21:31 The Heart Guy 3
22:15 American Classic
22:52 Matlock
23:36 Metumtemet 3
00:11 Wild Cards 3
00:56 Secrets of the Mountain

HOT ISRAELI ENTERTAINMENT

06:00 Renewal of Broadcasts at 08:00
08:00 Nasrin 3
08:26 The Game of Life
09:15 Michaela
10:00 Bat El the Virgin
10:28 Pushers
10:56 The Bloggers
11:16 Nasrin 3
11:43 The Game of Life
12:30 Michaela
13:15 Connected 12
13:42 My Sister Jackie 2
14:08 Pushers
14:38 The Game of Life
15:23 Michaela
16:12 Nasrin 3
16:39 Connected 12
17:08 The Game of Life
17:53 Michaela
18:40 My Sister Jackie 2
19:06 Nasrin 3
19:35 Connected 12
20:01 The Game of Life
20:48 Michaela
21:30 Bat El the Virgin
21:57 Nasrin 3
22:25 Connected 12
22:50 The Game of Life
23:36 Michaela
00:23 Nasrin 3
00:51 Bat El the Virgin
01:19 Hezi & Sons
01:49 My Sister Jackie 2
02:19 I BUTTERFLY
02:39 The Bloggers
03:02 Full Moon
03:27 My Sister Jackie 2
03:53 Renewal of Broadcasts at 08:00

HOT ZONE (H5)

07:12 NCIS 23
07:54 Law & Order 25
08:35 Chicago PD 11
09:17 Boston Blue
09:59 Law & Order: SVU 27
10:40 NCIS 23
11:22 Law & Order 25
12:03 NCIS: Sydney
12:48 CIA
13:30 Chicago PD 11
14:12 Boston Blue
14:55 Law & Order: SVU 27
15:36 Law & Order 25
16:18 NCIS: Sydney
17:03 Chicago PD 11
17:45 NCIS 23
18:27 Boston Blue
19:10 Law & Order: SVU 27
19:51 NCIS: Sydney
20:36 CIA
21:18 Law & Order 25
22:00 Boston Blue
22:43 Chicago PD 11
23:25 NCIS 23

YES TV DRAMA

07:00 Sister Boniface 2
07:50 Friday Night Lights 5
08:50 Our House
09:32 Suits 5
10:21 Yes Man
10:55 Sister Boniface 2
11:45 Bodeket
12:20 Friday Night Lights 5
13:09 Yes Man
13:43 Suits 5
14:32 Sister Boniface 2
15:22 Our House
16:14 Suits 5
16:57 Friday Night Lights 5
17:40 Yes Man
18:14 Our House
19:02 Suits 5
19:51 Yes Man
20:25 Bodeket
21:00 Sullivan's Crossing 4
21:50 A Remarkable Place To Die
22:38 Fellow Travelers
23:35 For Her Sins
00:00 Hatabach 2
00:38 American Classic
01:18 Fellow Travelers
02:15 For Her Sins

YES TV ACTION

06:30 Law & Order (2022) 24
07:15 Law & Order (2022) 24
08:00 9-1-1 Season 8
08:45 Chicago Fire 12
09:30 Chicago Fire 12
10:15 After The Flood 2
11:05 Kabul
12:00 Ncis 22
12:45 Law & Order (2022) 24
13:30 Law & Order (2022) 24
14:15 Chicago Fire 12
15:00 Chicago Fire 12
15:45 After The Flood 2
16:35 Kabul
17:30 Ncis 22
18:15 Law & Order (2022) 24
19:00 Law & Order (2022) 24
19:45 Seal Team 7
20:30 Chicago Fire 12
21:15 Chicago Fire 13
22:00 The Hunting Party 2
22:45 The Betrayal
23:35 Paris Has Fallen
00:33 Taagad 2
01:08 Taagad 2
01:43 Paris Has Fallen
02:31 Taagad 2

YES TV COMEDY

06:45 St. Denis Medical
07:10 St. Denis Medical
07:35 Community 2
08:00 Community 2
08:25 Habuzaglos 9
08:55 Habuzaglos 9
09:25 Brooklyn 99
09:50 Brooklyn 99
10:15 That 70's Show 3
10:40 That 70's Show 3
11:05 Married With Children 3
11:30 Married With Children 3
11:55 3rd Rock From The Sun 2
12:20 3rd Rock From The Sun 2
12:45 The Office 8
13:10 The Office 8
13:35 St. Denis Medical
14:00 St. Denis Medical
14:25 Community 2
14:50 Community 2
15:15 Habuzaglos 9
15:45 Habuzaglos 9
16:15 Brooklyn 99
16:40 Brooklyn 99
17:05 That 70's Show 3
17:30 That 70's Show 3
17:55 Married With Children 3
18:20 Married With Children 3
18:45 3rd Rock From The Sun 2
19:10 3rd Rock From The Sun 2
19:35 The Office 8
20:00 The Office 8
20:25 Brooklyn 99 52
20:50 Brooklyn 99 52
21:15 That 70's Show 3
21:40 That 70's Show 3
22:05 Married With Children 3
22:30 Married With Children 3
22:55 3rd Rock From The Sun 2
23:20 3rd Rock From The Sun 2
23:45 The Office 8
00:05 The Office 8
00:30 The Office 8
00:55 St. Denis Medical
01:20 St. Denis Medical
01:45 Community 2

MIDDLE EAST TV (Y109/H150)

11:30 The 700 Club
12:30 It's Supernatural
13:00 ISN Mentoring Programing
14:00 Currency of Heaven
14:30 The Deepest Well
15:00 Three Guys Named Mike
16:30 Pour it Out with Ben & Jodie Hughes
17:00 Wisdom to Win With Dr. Clarice
17:30 The Truth Project
18:00 Good Week Israel
18:30 It's Supernatural
19:00 The 700 Club
20:00 Wonders Without Numbers with David Rives
21:00 It's Supernatural
21:30 Israel Daily
22:00 One America News Network
23:00 Manna Fest with Perry Stone
23:30 Cross Talk With Dr. Randy Weiss
00:00 Flavors Of Israel
00:30 Three Guys Named Mike

HISTORY (Y37/H43)

06:15 Eli Israeli: A Journey to Brazil
07:03 Pawn Stars 25 - Ep. 2
07:43 Ancient Aliens 16 - Ep. 14
08:25 Holy Marvles with Dennis Quaid - Ep. 6
09:06 Life After People 3 - Ep. 8
09:46 History's Greatest Picks With Mike Wolfe
10:27 The Fast History of - Ep. 8

10:48 The Proof is Out There - Ep. 19
11:28 Pawn Stars 25 - Ep. 2
12:08 Ancient Aliens 16 - Ep. 14
12:50 Holy Marvles with Dennis Quaid - Ep. 6
13:31 Life After People 3 - Ep. 8
14:12 History's Greatest Picks With Mike Wolfe
14:53 The Fast History of - Ep. 8
15:13 The Proof is Out There - Ep. 19
15:54 Pawn Stars 25 - Ep. 2
16:34 Ancient Aliens 16 - Ep. 14
17:16 Holy Marvles with Dennis Quaid - Ep. 6
17:57 The Curse of Oak Island 12 - Ep. 1
19:18 History's Greatest Picks With Mike Wolfe
19:59 The Fast History of - Ep. 9
20:19 The Proof is Out There - Ep. 20
21:00 Pawn Stars 25 - Ep. 3
21:40 Ancient Aliens 16 - Ep. 15
22:22 Holy Marvles with Dennis Quaid - Ep. 7
23:03 The Curse of Oak Island 12 - Ep. 1
00:17 The Fast History of - Ep. 8
00:38 The Proof is Out There - Ep. 19
01:18 Pawn Stars 25 - Ep. 2
01:58 Ancient Aliens 16 - Ep. 14
02:40 Clip Time - Ep. 8
03:10 Clip Time - Ep. 9
03:42 Clip Time - Ep. 10
04:12 Clip Time - Ep. 11
04:42 Clip Time - Ep. 12

CLASSICA HD

06:05 Mozart: Piano Concerto No. 23, KV 488
06:33 Classica Spotlight
07:00 Celibidache: The Triumphant Return
07:56 Beethoven: Symphony No. 8 (Jordan)
08:25 Choral Music by Bach, Schutz et al.
09:40 Tchaikovsky: Lensky's Aria
10:50 Discovering Masterpieces
10:18 Semi-final I: Chopin and Scriabin
10:46 Classica Spotlight
11:00 Naples, City of Keyboards
11:48 Boulez and the Lucerne Festival Academy
12:47 Johan de Meij: "'Echoes of San Marco"
13:31 Final: Beethoven, Chopin et al.
14:25 Rachmaninoff: Piano Concerto No. 4
15:02 Josquin: Missa fortuna desperata
16:01 Mahler: The Youth Wundhorn
17:04 Mahler: Symphony No. 9 (2004)
18:24 Riccardo Chailly Conducts Mendelssohn
19:58 Bach: Cello Suite No. 5 (Bjlsma)
20:23 Patmos - A Musical Documentary
21:17 Brahms: Symphony No. 1 (Welser-Most)
22:00 Mahler: Symphony No. 1 (Luisi)
23:00 Monteverdi: Madrigals, Book III
00:20 Bizet: L'Arlesienne Suite (Pletnev)
00:48 Bach: Sonatas for Violin and Piano
01:00 Mahler: Symphony No. 1 (2021)
01:59 The Berlin Philharmonic in Tokyo
03:39 Music of Naples
03:51 Verdi: La Traviata (2008)

YES DOCU (Y8)

09:15 Icons Unearthed: Marvel - Ep.3 Eight part documentary series. Cast, crew, and experts reveal never-before-heard stories about the Marvel Cinematic Universe and its most iconic film and television series of all time. 2023
10:00 Twin Life: Sharing Mind And Body A year in the life of the astonishing Hogan cranioapagus twins. Doctors suspect they both feel and see the same things. Their family even believes they can taste what the other tastes. Dir. Judith Pyke. Canada, 2014.
10:45 The Fall The story of Mary Decker and Zola Budd and their lives building up to the infamous 1984 Olympics 3000M race in which both of them collide. Dir. Daniel Gordon. UK. 2016.
12:20 Menendez + Menudo... Ep.3 "Menendez + Menudo: Boys Betrayed". The true story of the two brothers, Lyle and Eric Menendez, who brutally killed their parents in Beverly Hills in 1989 and another victim in the case, who speaks for the first time, 2024
13:20 A Case of a Lifetime - 2 The historic murder of Judge Adi Azar in 2004 interrupted the detectives, and take them to the case of their lives. Dir. Nili Tal. 2018.
14:10 Alive: The Andes Plane Disaster - 2 When a rugby team's plane crashed in the Andes Mountains in October 1972, they were left with little hope of rescue. They faced an impossible situation: eat frozen dead bodies of their friends or die of starvation. 2023
15:00 The Dayan Dynasty - 3 Documentary series that sits for the first time in front of the camera the descendants of the tribe of Dayan who tell of the ups and downs the family has known throughout the generations. Dir. Anat Goren. Israel, 2019.
16:00 Anselm A unique documentary that follows the life of Anselm Kiefer, one of the greatest contemporary artists of Germany, as it dives deep into the artist's work and reveals his life path. Dir: Wim Wenders. 2023.
17:30 Icons Unearthed: Marvel - Ep.4 Eight part documentary series. Cast, crew, and experts reveal never-before-heard stories about the Marvel Cinematic Universe and its most iconic film and television series of all time. 2023
18:15 Johatsu: Into Thin Air In Japan, some people vanish to escape their lives and start anew. This haunting film explores their stories and the loved ones left behind. Dir.: Andreas Hartmann, Arata Mori. Germany. 2024
19:10 Schmeichel The astonishing 22-year football career of Peter Schmeichel, and his life beyond the sport, are reviewed in this documentary through interviews with Peter, his family and

key figures in the world of football. UK, 2025.
20:45 The Dayan Dynasty - 4 Documentary series that sits for the first time in front of the camera the descendants of the tribe of Dayan who tell of the ups and downs the family has known throughout the generations. Dir. Anat Goren. Israel, 2019.
22:00 Mockbuster A humorous behind-the-scenes documentary on the making of a B-movie, both a love letter to schlock films and a sharp study of the tension between creative passion and commercial pressure. Dir. Anthony Frith. 2025
23:30 A Case of a Lifetime - 3 In 1987, Abraham Smarandi was murdered by Ezra Shanasi, who was jailed and was released after only six years due to a medical report. The daughter of the murdered man managed to do justice. Dir. Nili Tal. 2018.

CHANNEL 8 (H8)

06:02 I'm Cheve Chase and Your'e not
07:40 Who Murdered Tair Rada?
08:18 To Kill a Dictator
09:15 Islands: Nature's Wild Laboratories
10:05 Turbulence: How safe is your flight?
10:58 Rise and Kill
11:50 I'm Cheve Chase and Your'e not
13:28 To Kill a Dictator
14:25 Islands: Nature's Wild Laboratories
15:15 Turbulence: How safe is your flight?
16:05 I'm Cheve Chase and Your'e not
17:44 To Kill a Dictator
18:42 Turbulence: How safe is your flight?
19:35 Rise and Kill
20:25 Islands: Nature's Wild Laboratories
21:15 Rise and Kill
22:10 The Price of Comfort
23:40 Who Murdered Tair Rada?
00:25 Rise and Kill
01:15 The Price of Comfort
02:45 Who Murdered Tair Rada?
03:30 Rise and Kill

MEZZO FULL (H195)

10:24 InterMezzo A selection of short musical clips and artmusic - enjoy a variety of genres from Jazz to Classical music.
11:00 Waldbuhne 2025: Gustavo Dudamel Berlin Philharmonie, Ryan Speedo Green (bass-baritone) led by Gustavo Dudamel perform works by Gabriela Ortiz, Arturo Marquez, Antonio Estevez Aponte, Aaron Copland, Evencio Castellanos, and others.
12:38 Nielsen: Symphony No. 4 (Luisi) Danish National Symphony Orchestra led by Fabio Luisi performs Carl Nielsen's Symphony No. 4, Op. 29 'The Inextinguishable'. DR Koncerthuset, Copenhagen, 2023.
13:45 InterMezzo A selection of short musical clips and artmusic - enjoy a variety of genres from Jazz to Classical music.
14:30 Yehudi Menuhin, Violin of the Century Classical.
16:25 Jonathan Cohen: Handel, Pergolesi Les Violons du Roy, Carolyn Sampson (soprano), Tim Mead (countertenor) led by Jonathan Cohen perform works by Georg Friderich Handel, Giovanni Battista Pergolesi, and Antonio Vivaldi. Montreal, 2022.
16:25 InterMezzo A selection of short musical clips and artmusic - enjoy a variety of genres from Jazz to Classical music.
18:05 La grande danza - Aterbalto in Milan Aterballetto dance company perform Choreographies by Jiri Pokorny (Words & Space), Giuseppe Spota (Narcissus), Philippe Kratz (Phoenix). Milan, 2017.
19:29 Prix de Lausanne: Rising Stars Gala 2026 The Prix de Lausanne: Rising Stars Gala 2026 at Theatre de Beaulieu, Lausanne, 2026.
21:30 Sartorio: L'Orfeo - Opera de Montpellier Opera in 3 acts. Ensemble Artaserse led by Philippe Jaroussky. Arianna Vendittelli (Orfeo), Alicia Amo (Euridice), Kangmin Justin Kim (Aristeo), Zachary Wilder (Erinda). Montpellier, 2023.
00:48 Avishai Cohen Quintet - Jazz in Marciac Avishai Cohen (double bass, bass, vocals), Yonatan Valtzok (trombone), Yuval Drabkin (saxophone), Itay Simhovich (piano), and Roni Kaspi (drums) perform at Jazz in Marciac, 2024.
02:26 Portico Quartet - Jazz a Junas Portico Quartet performs at Jazz a Junas Festival, 2022.
03:46 Vivaldi, Bach, Telemann - Spinosi Ensemble Matheus and Ana Maria Labin (soprano) led by Jean-Christophe Spinosi perform works by Vivaldi, J. S. Bach, and Telemann. Sommet Musicaux de Gstaad Festival, 2022.
04:51 Rameau: Les Fetes d'Hebe Opera in 3 acts. Les Arts Florissants led by William Christie. Lisandro Abadie (Eurilias-Alce), Marc Maullion (Mercure-Momus). Opera Comique, Paris, 2024

MOVIES

07:34 Changing Lanes Thriller. An accident between a successful attorney and an insurance salesman turns the two into sworn enemies. Cast: Ben Affleck, Samuel L. Jackson. Dir.: Roger Michell (USA, 2002).
09:12 Mystic Pizza Three teenage girls come of age while working at a pizza parlor in Mystic, Connecticut. Cast: Annabeth Gish, Julia Roberts, Vincent D'Onofrio, Lili Taylor (1988)
10:55 Bad Boys II Detectives Mike and Marcus return to fight drug dealers in Florida. Mean-while, things heat up between Marcus's sister and Mike. With Martin Lawrence, Will Smith 2003
13:19 Transformers: The Last Knight Autobots and Decepticons are at war. Optimus Prime is gone. The key to saving the day lies in the past. With Mark Wahlberg, Anthony Hopkins (2017)
15:50 Terminator Genisys Sci fi. In the film's fifth sequel, the

human rebellion leader sends a soldier back to 1984 to protect Sarah Connor and ensure the future. With Arnold Schwarzenegger. (2015)
17:55 The Talented Mr. Ripley Tom Ripley is sent to Europe to retrieve a spoiled millionaire playboy, but when the errand fails, Ripley decides to assume his life. With: Matt Damon, Gwyneth Paltrow (1999).
20:12 Back to the Future Part II Comic Fantasy. After visiting 2015, Marty must repeat his visit to 1955 to prevent Biff Tannen from stealing the time machine. Cast: Michael J. Fox, Christopher Lloyd. Dir.: Robert Zemeckis (USA 1989).
22:00 Copshop A con artist hides from a hitman inside a police station. When the hitman shows up, a rookie cop finds herself in the crosshairs. Cast: Gerard Butler, Frank Grillo. Dir.: Joe Carnahan (USA, 2021).
23:47 Mercy Thriller. Set in the near future, a detective accused of murdering his wife has 90 minutes to prove his innocence to an AI judge. Cast: Chris Pratt, Rebecca Ferguson. Dir.:Timur Bekmambetov (USA 2026)
01:26 Death Race Action. An ex-con is forced by the warden of a notorious prison to compete in a car race in which one must kill to win. With Jason Statham, Joan Allen (2008)

HOT CINEMA 2 (H17)

06:11 Trauma Center Action. Alone and trapped in a locked-down hospital, an injured young woman must escape a pair of vicious killers. Cast: Bruce Willis. Dir.: Matt Eskandari (USA, 2019).
07:50 Venom: The Last Dance Action. Eddie Brock and Venom must make a devastating decision as they're pursued by a mysterious military man and alien monsters. Cast: Tom Hardy, Joaquin Phoenix. Dir.: Kelly Marcel (USA, 2024).
09:39 Elevation Action. A single father and two women venture from their homes to face monstrous creatures to save the life of a young boy. Cast: Anthony Mackie, Morena Baccarin. Dir.: George Nolfi (USA, 2024).
11:11 Blacklight Action. A government operative discovers a plot targeting U.S. citizens, and finds himself in the crosshairs of the FBI director. Cast: Liam Neeson, Aidan Quinn. Dir.: Mark Williams (USA, 2022).
12:56 Force of Nature A gang of thieves plan a heist during a hurricane and encounter trouble when a cop tries to force everyone in the building to evacuate. Cast:Mel Gibson, Kate Bosworth. Dir.:Michael Polish (USA, 2020).
14:35 Anna In Anna's striking beauty lies a secret that will unleash her indelible strength and skill to become an assassin. Cast: Sasha Luss, Helen Mirren. Dir.: Luc Besson (France, 2019).
16:34 The 355 A CIA agent joins forces with 3 international agents on a mission to retrieve a top-secret weapon that fell into mercenary hands. Cast:Jessica Chastain, Penelope Cruz. Dir.:Simon Kinberg (USA, 2022).
18:36 7 Days in Entebbe Inspired by the true events of the 1976 hijacking of an Air France flight from Tel Aviv to Paris, and the most daring rescue mission ever attempted. Cast: Daniel Bruhl. Dir.: Jose Padilha. UK, 2018
20:23 Warfare Action. A platoon of Navy SEALs embark on a mission in Iraq, with the chaos and brotherhood of war retold through their memories. Cast: Will Poulter. Dir.: Alex Garland, Ray Mendoza (USA, 2025).
22:00 Acts of Vengeance A lawyer transforms his body and takes a vow to find out who killed his wife and daughter and has his revenge. Cast: Antonio Banderas, Paz Vega. Dir.: Isaac Florentine (USA, 2017).
23:26 Off the Grid Thriller. A brilliant scientist goes on the run instead of weaponizing his invention. Cast: Josh Duhamel, Greg Kinnear. Dir.: Johnny Martin (USA, 2025).

01:10 Assassin Club Action. An assassin is given a contract to kill seven people, only to discover the targets are also assassins who have been hired to kill him. Cast: Henry Golding. Dir.: Camille Delamarre (USA, 2023).
03:00 Cinderella's Curse Horror. Based on the same folktale that Disney updated and popularized for children, back in the 1950s. Cast: Kelly Rian Sanson, Danielle Scott. Dir.: Louisa Warren (UK, 2024).
06:47 The Wedding Year. A commitment-phobic 27 year old's relationship is put to the test when she and her new boyfriend go to 7 weddings in the same year. Cast: Sarah Hyland. Dir.: Robert Luketic (USA, 2019).
08:22 Moonstruck When there's a full moon over Brooklyn, anything can happen, and everything happens in the neighborhood where widowed bookkeeper Loretta Castorini lives... With Cher, Nicolas Cage (1987)
10:04 Death Becomes Her When a woman learns of an immortality treatment, she sees it as a way to outdo her long-time rival. Cast: Bruce Willis, Meryl Streep, Goldie Hawn, Isabella Rossellini (1992)
11:48 We're the Millers A pot dealer creates a fake family as part of his plan to move a huge shipment of weed into the U.S. from Mexico. Cast: Jason Sudeikis, Jennifer Aniston. Dir: Rawson Marshall Thurman. USA, 2013
13:38 Bride Hard Action. When a mercenary group takes a lavish wedding hostage, they have no idea what they are in for as the maid of honor is actually a secret agent. Cast: Rebel Wilson. Dir: Simon West (USA, 2025).
15:23 Jackpot! Comedy. In the near future, a "Grand Lottery" is established - the catch: kill the winner before sundown to legally claim their multi-billion dollar jackpot. Cast:John Cena. Dir.:Paul

HOT CINEMA 3 (H18)

06:47 The Wedding Year. A commitment-phobic 27 year old's relationship is put to the test when she and her new boyfriend go to 7 weddings in the same year. Cast: Sarah Hyland. Dir.: Robert Luketic (USA, 2019).
08:22 Moonstruck When there's a full moon over Brooklyn, anything can happen, and everything happens in the neighborhood where widowed bookkeeper Loretta Castorini lives... With Cher, Nicolas Cage (1987)
10:04 Death Becomes Her When a woman learns of an immortality treatment, she sees it as a way to outdo her long-time rival. Cast: Bruce Willis, Meryl Streep, Goldie Hawn, Isabella Rossellini (1992)
11:48 We're the Millers A pot dealer creates a fake family as part of his plan to move a huge shipment of weed into the U.S. from Mexico. Cast: Jason Sudeikis, Jennifer Aniston. Dir: Rawson Marshall Thurman. USA, 2013
13:38 Bride Hard Action. When a mercenary group takes a lavish wedding hostage, they have no idea what they are in for as the maid of honor is actually a secret agent. Cast: Rebel Wilson. Dir: Simon West (USA, 2025).
15:23 Jackpot! Comedy. In the near future, a "Grand Lottery" is established - the catch: kill the winner before sundown to legally claim their multi-billion dollar jackpot. Cast:John Cena. Dir.:Paul

Feig (USA, 2025)
17:07 The Love Punch Comedy. A divorced couple scheme to recover the retirement money that was stolen from them. With Emma Thompson, Pierce Brosnan (2012)
18:42 Tropic Thunder Through a series of freak occurrences, a group of actors shooting a war movie are forced to become the soldiers they are portraying. With Ben Stiller, Jeff Kahn, Robert Downey Jr. (2008)
20:29 Mr. Bean's Holiday Mr. Bean wins a trip to Cannes, where he unwittingly separates a young boy from his father and must help the two get back together. With Rowan Atkinson, Willem Dafoe. (UK, 2007).
22:00 Late Night Comedy. A late night talk show host suspects that she may soon lose her long-running show. Cast: Emma Thompson, Mindy Kaling. Dir.: Nisha Ganatra (USA, 201

‘In captivity, the music I knew just kept playing in my head’

Released hostage Sagui Dekel-Chen performs songs he wrote in Gaza

• By SAGI BIN NUN

In an emotional homecoming, former hostage Sagui Dekel-Chen performed a special concert on Monday night on the central lawn of Kibbutz Nir Oz, the community from which he was abducted during the October 7 attacks.

The Israel Festival event, titled “From Captivity to the Lawn: Stories and Songs,” drew 3,000 attendees, including bereaved families and other former captives. The concert marked the first public debut of nine songs Dekel-Chen authored, composed, and mentally cataloged throughout his 498 days of captivity in the Gaza Strip.

Flanked by a live band and joined by prominent Israeli artists – including Idan Raichel, Marina Maximilian, and the band Hatikva 6 – Dekel-Chen detailed the psychological role music played during his confinement.

“In captivity, the music I knew just kept playing in my head,” Dekel-Chen told the audience. “Initially, it served as a sedative. Later, it became a weapon to maintain sanity.”

Dekel-Chen described nightly routines where he held imag-

IDAN RAICHEL (left) and Sagui Dekel-Chen embrace on stage at the concert in Nir Oz on Monday night. (Avi Rokach)



inary conversations and storytelling sessions with his daughters. Morning routines involved pacing the corner of his cell while visualizing dancing with his wife to tracks by Israeli singer Rita.

The debut material captures a stark juxtaposition between trauma and domestic hope.

In “Song of Songs,” Dekel-Chen sings, “We used to sing

at the top of our lungs, now I sing in silence.” Another piece, “Don’t Know Your Name Yet,” is dedicated to his youngest daughter, who was born while he was in Gaza.

In “The Song for Me,” Dekel-Chen articulates his psychological struggles post-release, noting that while he fears nightmares and lingering trauma, his primary fear was “returning

to an empty house.”

During the performance, Dekel-Chen recounted the events of October 7, detailing his engagement with the kibbutz civilian response team, his wound, and his abduction. He admitted that because he witnessed explosions and gunfire at his residence during his capture, he spent nearly his entire captivity believing his family

had been killed.

To survive, Dekel-Chen said he deliberately maintained a falsehood in his own mind that his children were alive. When informed by captors on February 12, 2025, that he was scheduled for release within three days, he ceased the self-deception and began mathematically planning funerals for his daughters, assuming the worst. Upon his release, he discovered his family had survived.

Kibbutz Nir Oz suffered severe casualties and abductions during the October 7 attack. The concert’s artistic director, Itay Mautner, rejected the notion that the musical event was a form of escapism, framing it instead as an essential, public processing of ongoing regional trauma.

Speaking after the event, Prof. Jonathan Dekel-Chen, Sagui’s father and a professional historian, characterized the concert as dual-purpose.

“On one hand, it is a prayer of gratitude that Sagui returned on his own two feet,” he said. “On the other, it is a prayer for everything that was lost here in Nir Oz. The grief, the loss, and the difficulty of the abandonment remain with us forever.”

Lea Shabat drops ‘bucket list album’

Features hits from live TA concert

• By SAGI BIN NUN

Iconic singer Lea Shabat is finally releasing a live album for the first time in her career.

The mini-album captures the magic of her show at the iconic Charles Bronfman Auditorium (Heichal Hatarbut) in Tel Aviv in February, which marked four decades of her making music.

Shabat has been a staple of the Israeli music scene since the mid-’80s, getting her start as a backing vocalist on Matti Caspi’s legendary album *Eretz Tropit Meshuga’at*. Her very first radio hit was “Lo Zocheret Eize Choref” (“Don’t Remember Which Winter”), a track she wrote and composed herself. It was produced by her ex-partner, Arkadi Duchin.

Her next big hit was “Biglal Haruach” (“Because of the Wind”), which she wrote the music for (with lyrics by Micha Shitrit) and gave to her brother, Shlomi Shabat, to perform.

The new extended play *Live Performance – at the Tel Aviv Charles Bronfman Auditorium* features five of her biggest tracks: “Chatichat Shamayim” (“A Piece of Sky”), “Chamaniyot Mul Hashemesh” (“Sunflowers Facing the Sun”) – her duet with



LEA SHABAT (Alon Levine)

David D’Or – “Hashir Sheyavi Lecha Ahava” (“The Song That Will Bring You Love”), “Rak Hachaim” (“Only Life”), and “Tamid Yechaku Lecha” (“They Will Always Wait for You”).

“Playing the Charles Bronfman Auditorium is on every singer’s bucket list, and it was definitely on mine,” Shabat said. “I’m so incredibly grateful for that night; it was an amazing experience and a huge milestone for me.”

Shabat has put out eight studio albums over the years. In November, she was honored with the prestigious Ehud Manor ACUM Lifetime Achievement Award.

‘Fauda’ Season 5 coming to Netflix on September 8

• By HANNAH BROWN

For *Fauda* fans from around the world, the suspense is over, or rather, it’s about to begin: Netflix just announced it will show the fifth season of the acclaimed Israeli series around the world beginning on September 8.

The fifth season of this series about an Israeli counterterrorism unit aired in Israel on Yes starting in May. But with the September 8 Netflix release, viewers in 190 countries will be able to see the new episodes, which are in Arabic, Hebrew, French, and English, with subtitles in their native languages.

The series, which was co-created by Avi Issacharoff and Lior Raz, and which stars Raz, debuted in 2015 in Israel. It was picked up by Netflix and became a worldwide sensation, hitting the coveted Netflix Top 10 charts all over, including in Arab countries.

In Lebanon, the fourth season hit the No. 1 spot in January 2023. It also reached the Top 10 in Jordan, Qatar, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates in early 2023. Reportedly, *Fauda* is something of a guilty pleasure for Palestinian audiences in the West Bank and even in Gaza, who enjoy seeing the many Palestinian characters.

Fauda’s creators had much of the fifth season written by the fall of 2023, but scrapped these

scripts following the Hamas massacre on October 7, 2023, which led to the outbreak of war. Raz and Issacharoff have said in interviews that they needed to incorporate the new reality into the series.

In the fifth season, two episodes are devoted to the massacre, and feature violence so graphic that they were shown with warnings in Israel that advised audiences that they could skip the episodes – which came in the middle of the season – if they were afraid that they might be too upsetting. Yes also took the unusual step of making the episodes available for free online, for those who felt they needed to see them.

Speaking to Deadline, Issacharoff said, “This is a TV show, not reality. But we thought that there is still a story here to be told. We wanted to ask very tough questions to people all over the world, not only in Israel. Is the revenge worth it? Is continuing this very endless cycle of bloodshed worth it? Where is it taking you? I think these are the questions that are at the heart of this season.”

In addition to Raz, the fifth season stars the original cast members Doron Ben-David and Yaakov Zada-Daniel, who are joined by French star Melanie Laurent, who played the heroine of Quentin Tarantino’s *Inglourious Basterds*. Much of the early season five episodes are set in Marseille.

Fauda is still available on Yes VOD in Israel.

Moving, complex ‘Valley of Shadows’ explores culture clash in the Himalayas

Backpacker journey features spectacular photography, compelling performances

FILM REVIEW

• By HANNAH BROWN

There have been many movies in recent years chronicling the journey of Westerners into Third World countries where they travel to engage with nature or seek spirituality and enlightenment. Most of these, however, have been one-note, with the foreign travelers meeting locals who are glowing with wisdom and virtue, or who turn out to be criminals engaged in drug trafficking or other illegal enterprises.

Given all that, I was happy to see Salvador Calvo’s *Valley of Shadows* – opening throughout Israel on Thursday – which does not feature stereotypes or offer easy answers. It tells the story of Quique (Miguel Herran), a Spanish tourist who undergoes a horrific ordeal in northern India and ends up spending months in a tiny isolated village.

His time there gives him an unusual insight into the lives of the inhabitants of this area, whose existence is ruled by the harshness of nature and their lack of resources. They accept the limitations imposed on them in a way that is initially very difficult for Quique to understand and accept.

But through his experiences with them, he changes his perspective in a fundamental way. The story, which would otherwise be bleak, becomes something of a classic hero’s journey as he eventually transcends his own limitations to find courage he didn’t know he possessed.

The movie, which features gorgeous photography of the Himalayas, starts out as Quique is traveling with Clara (Susana Abaitua), his girlfriend, and her son, Lucas (Iván Renedo), to whom he is very attached. They are part of the young backpacker culture who want an

authentic experience.

They cope with the thin air and stay without complaint in guesthouses with no showers, joining the locals for hot baths at public facilities. But it is not an easy time for them. Clara has had cancer, and Quique sees this trip as an opportunity for her to heal.

When they hear of a village that some tourists tell them they must see to fully experience all the Himalayas have to offer, he is eager to visit it, even though it is isolated and the path to it is challenging. Clara would like them to go to Goa so she can go surfing, but Quique persuades her to head for the village with him and Lucas, which he hopes will help her come back to herself after a mastectomy. She agrees reluctantly.

INEVITABLY, THEY get lost and camp out for the night in a remote spot. It’s difficult to discuss this next section without revealing spoilers, but they are separated, and Quique is beaten by bandits and left for dead. A local trader picks him up and takes him back to his mountain village.

In a monastery there, he is treated with local remedies for his injuries, and when he regains consciousness, he is confused and barely able to walk. Frantically, he insists he must report what has happened to the police immediately.

The monk and his assistant, Prana (Alexandra Masangkay, who gives the movie’s standout performance), a young woman with an eye-patch that covers a serious injury of her own, insist that he make a contribution to their monastery, and he struggles to explain what happened to him and why he has no money.

Prana speaks English and Spanish and translates for the head monk. Quique learns to his dismay that there is no way to travel to any village with police for months, until the river freezes and it is possible to

walk there. But he must report the crime and get in touch with their families, he insists, to which the locals shrug. There is nothing to be done right now.

Much of the rest of the movie is about Quique getting to know the villagers and absorbing their point of view. In many ways, this film is reminiscent of the movies by the director and Buddhist lama Khyentse Norbu, who made *The Cup* and *Travelers & Magicians*, and Pawo Choyning Dorji, the director of the Oscar-nominated *Lumana: A Yak in the Classroom* and *The Monk and the Gun*.

All of these movies are set in Bhutan and northern India and deal with the clash between Buddhist tradition, third-world realities, and Western culture. It’s high praise that *Valley of Shadows* brought to mind these films, which are among the most interesting movies of the past 25 years.

Valley of Shadows neither glorifies nor demonizes the local culture, and it makes it clear that tourists are putting themselves in danger by going off on their own in a place where their phones, cameras, and the contents of their wallets represent more money than most residents can hope to earn in years.

This is a reality that so many Westerners seem to ignore when they head off on their treks, and it’s true that most of the time, they return home safely. But the risk is real, and *Valley of Shadows* explores it.

By the end, we have learned so much about the villagers that our perspective on them has changed, as has Quique’s. Alejandro Hernandez’s script, which tells us exactly as much as we need to know at any point, is low-key but effective. Combined with the spectacular photography and compelling performances by the entire cast, many of whom are non-professionals, the movie takes us on a moving journey.



‘VALLEY OF SHADOWS’ tells the story of a Spanish tourist who ends up spending months in a tiny isolated village. (Courtesy Nachshon Films)

Revamped ‘Peter Pan’ musical returns to TA stage

• Jerusalem Post Staff

The Hebrew musical *Peter Pan*, originally written by Uri Paster and Hanoach Rosen, returned to the stage this week with a pre-premiere performance at the Tel Aviv Performing Arts Center.

The new production of the 1988 musical is directed by Rosen, who played the title role in the original version. The

current cast features Lee Biran as Peter Pan, Meshi Kleinstein as Wendy, and Sasson Gabbay, who reprises his 1988 role as Captain Hook.

The ensemble also includes Linoy Cohen, Tal Levin, Ofir Weil, Assaf Levi, Gilad Brown, Hanan Schwartzberg, Liam Pinto, and TimoTi Sannikov.

The original Hebrew staging from over 35 years ago was a major commercial suc-

cess, generating a home video release, a book, and a popular soundtrack.

This updated version retains the signature sword fights alongside a modernized theatrical flight system.

The production runs at the Tel Aviv venue through August, drawing audiences of both original fans and families. The performance features the show’s original Hebrew music.*

THE NEW VERSION OF ‘Peter Pan’ retains the signature sword fights alongside a modernized theatrical flight system. (Dafna Ben Nun)